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issue 2, vol 1

COMPLETELY FREE*
* for IGNinsiders, that is

FROM THE MAKERS OF DRIVER 2

STUNTMAN

GET A JOB
IN THE GAMING INDUSTRY

SONIC ADVENTURE 2
TAKASHI IIZUKA INTERVIEW

N64 IMPORT GUIDE
WHAT GAMES TO BUY -
WHAT GAMES TO BURN

GBA GAME REVIEWS
F-ZERO AND ADVANCE GTA
TAKEN TO THE TEST

XBOX GETS AMPED
WE TALK SNOWBOARDING
WITH MICROSOFT

STUNTMAN

IGN's MOM

YOUR MOM
IS NOT IN THIS MAGAZINE

Snowball

... AND **DVD** REVIEWS, **DJ** GEAR, COMICS FOR BIG BOYS, CHEATS, CODES AND MORE!

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UNPLUGGED THIS MONTH:

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Cover Story: Stuntman
Think San Francisco Rush was over the top? Take a look at what the Driver 2 team's doing. pg. 7

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PS2: Gunslinger

Way back in June of last year I heard about a game called Gunslinger that really peaked my interest. Ever since I read that short little preview way back when, I've been wondering when I can get my hands on it. Have you guys heard anything else about Gunslinger? Is it still being produced or has it been canned? If you have any info on this great looking western game, can you let me know.

--Tom

Dave Z responds: *We haven't heard or seen anything about Gunslinger since last E3 when it was running at around 5 frames per second. We hope to see it at E3, and running smoothly, as the game has a very good premise.*

PS2: Conker's Bad Fur Day Sequel?

dear guy who said dragon ball z sucks,

dragon ball z doesn't suck! it's awesome! u r lame and whoever doesn't like dbz is lame! just wait till the dbz game comes out on ps2 it's gonna rule!

Dave Z responds: *You wanna know what else sucks? Your MOM! A Dragonball Z game that rules...isn't that an oxymoron or sorts?*

Gamecube: E3 Overview

hey guys, i was wondering if after e3 is all done if you will be making a final review that covers everything that happened. and if so will it only be on the insider?

-tegeto

Matt responds: *You bet. We're going to be working ourselves silly in order to squeeze as much content -- editorial and media -- into our coverage. And when everything's over with, we'll sit back, go through what we have, and bring it to you all in one big recap. This is somewhat of an IGN tradition, and I think it's a good one.*

We'll probably have some Insider exclusives in the future, but that won't be one of them, I assure you.

Gamecube: Sucker Punch

Whatever happened to Sucker Punch, the creators of Rocket:Robot on Wheels? That was a highly cool and creative game. Is the company working on Gamecube stuff now, and if so, will they also make games for other consoles? Thanks.

- Seth

Matt responds: *I talked with the guys from Sucker Punch a few months ago and unfortunately the developer is working exclusively on a PlayStation 2 project for the time being. It currently has no plans to bring any software to other platforms, but that may change in the future.*

Gamecube: DBZ Redux

I've heard that Infogrames is currently working on a lineup of Dragon Ball Z games, but I haven't heard whether they were console-exclusive. Do you know anything about these titles or their chances of making it to the Gamecube? Thanks.

-Harold

Matt responds: *To answer your question, I've heard nothing about any DBZ titles coming to GameCube.*

PC: Where's Lord British?

I was wondering what has happened to Richard Garriot since he left Origin last year and what his plans are for the future.

- Dave

Steve responds: *There is some information, Dave, but not much. Garriot is reportedly working on a new secret project that he won't reveal. It's simply called X (and not as in Ultima X, since Origin still owns that). Garriot it seems is trying to make a break from the fantasy avatar we've all come to identify with. We'll be sure to bring you more details on this project as soon as he releases them -- or someone with less scruples than us steals them and leaks them to us.*

PC: WarCraft 3

I know that WarCraft Adventures has been cancelled and replaced by Warcraft 3, but what was WarCraft Adventures supposed to be? An rpg, rts, rps or adventure?

– Julius (aka Batman)

Steve responds: *Warcraft Adventures: Lord of the Clans was a point and click adventure game that put you in the role of an Orc named Thrall, trying to free his Orcish brothers from enslavement in the human camps. The game was cancelled three years ago under some controversy. The official reason it was cancelled was that it wouldn't live up to Blizzard's high standards of quality. Many in t' industry suspect that the release of Monkey Island III around t' same time Warcraft Adventures was due out had a lot to do wi.*

Some folks at Blizzard seemed to think the project was nearly done when it was shelved while others reported that there were still "many more months" left in the development process. In the time since the game was cancelled, the point and click adventure genre has moved even further ahead (see: Myst III, Grim Fandango) so it's unlikely that Blizzard will decide to resurrect the title.

pc One Publisher to Bind Them

Vivendi Universal Publishing (parent company of Seattle-based Sierra Studios) and Tolkien Enterprises have struck a deal that gives Sierra the exclusive rights to publish games based on the J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings across multiple platforms.

Although nothing definite has been said about a PC title yet, Sierra was working on Middle Earth online in the past for the PC, and a recent lawsuit revealed that MM3D was continuing work on an online game set in the Tolkien universe.
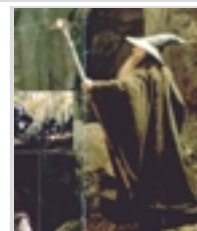
Microsoft Acquires Ensemble Studios   pc

Microsoft has announced that they have acquired Dallas-based developer Ensemble Studios, the minds behind the best-selling Age of Empires series. While this is certainly big news, it comes as little surprise since the publisher and developer have worked closely together for the past six years.

Stuart Moulder, general manager of the Games Division at Microsoft, sees this acquisition as a way of strengthening Microsoft's PC catalog, and we would have to agree. The "depth of talent and the leadership of Tony Goodman [president and CEO of Ensemble] is a winning combination," according to Moulder.

Off the Radar   n64

With less than a handful of titles still slated for release on Nintendo 64, we figured the Big "N" would eventually run out of games to cancel. Shows what we know. The latest reports out of Japan suggest that Nintendo has put Clever Trick's odd underwater real-time strategy game, Echo-Delta, on permanent hold.. Interestingly, the list of cancelled Nintendo 64 titles is now longer than the lineup of titles that actually made it out. The number of N64 games still slated for release in Japan has now dwindled to two.

GameCube Online for Launch?   gc

Whether through pressure from Microsoft or through strategic alliance with Sega, Nintendo's GameCube network plans seem to be further along than anyone would have suspected. While the company has traditionally downplayed the role online connectivity would play in GameCube's immediate future, reports from multiple third-party developers now confirm that Nintendo's new console may emerge as the first of the big three to go online. According to sources close to Nintendo, third-party developers like Sega and Capcom are well underway with network-capable games for GameCube. Specifics are likely to be unveiled at E3, so keep an eye on IGNcube and IGNinsider for more information.

Interplay Brings Five to Xbox   xbox

Interplay is currently prepping a total of five titles for Microsoft's Xbox console. According to a regulatory report filed in relation to Microsoft's loan of $5 million to Interplay, the five titles slated for Xbox release are The Matrix, Giants, Sacrifice, Galleon and Hunter: The Reckoning. With the exception of Hunter none of the other titles are expected to be exclusives. The report also explained that Interplay would pay back Microsoft's loan at a rate of $1million for each of the five games, which includes The Matrix.

From Blitz to Hitz   multi

During its quarterly earnings report, publisher Midway announced that it is expanding its popular arcade sports franchise started with NFL Blitz to include NHL hockey. Dubbed NHL Hitz 2002, this long-rumored extension of the extreme sports philosophy is headed for all major next-generation consoles, including PlayStation 2, Xbox and GameCube.. No details are available on the Hitz franchise yet, but we can expect to be allowed to do things like slam players through the glass and rib opponents with our hockey sticks.

Gran Turismo 3 Tops Sales Charts   ps2

Famitsu Weekly Magazine reports that Polyphony Digital's newly Gran Turismo 3 A-spec emerged as the top selling game in Japan for the week of April 23, 2001 to April 29, 2001. For its first full day of sales, GT3 sold through approximately 468,391 copies, according to the numbers printed in Famitsu. The first-day sales of GT3 A-spec makes it the fourth best selling PS2 game in Japan, with only Onimusha, Ridge Racer V, and Gekikuukan Pro Baseball: At the end of the Century 1999 still ahead of it. Although, it's likely that GT3's sales have already passed all three titles if the initial one million units that were shipped indeed sold out.

Games Have Major Economic Impact *multi*

In 2000, the computer and video game industry created 220,000 jobs and nearly $9 billion in wages and federal and state tax. That's according to a new report issued by the Interactive Digital Software Association (IDSA). The report also found that the industry generated an additional $10.5 billion in economic activity from the sale of computer and console software, and some game-related hardware. The detailed study of U.S. Government census and other economic data shows that sales in the game software industry in the year 2000 grew at a rate of 14.9 percent per year, more than double the rate of growth of the U.S. economy as a whole and far outpacing sales growth in related industries. Moreover, growth in employment, and wages in the computer and video game industry between 1995 and 2000 far outpaced growth in other major U.S. industries. For example, wages generated by the computer and video game industry showed an annual growth rate of 17.4 percent, and employment generated by the industry grew at 10.1 percent per year. By comparison, motion picture production, distribution and allied services sectors, widely considered to be the king of America's entertainment industries, have recognized growth in annual wages of 9.2 percent and employment of 5.2 percent during the same period.

First Xbox Star Wars Game Confirmed *xbox*

Lucasarts has confirmed Star Wars Starfighter: Special Edition for Microsoft's Xbox. Based on the popular PlayStation 2 version, Starfighter takes place during the time of Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace. Players slip into the roles of three different pilots to fight off the Trade Federation and bring peace to Naboo. The Xbox version of the game will feature five new bonus missions, more multiplayer modes, and enhanced graphics. Seeing as how one of the only complaints at all about the excellent PS2 version was the sometimes-jittery framerate, hopefully these graphic upgrades include a solid 60fps.

scifi UPN Bites Buffy

It was recently announced that the beloved WB staple will move to UPN next season. UPN agreed to pay 20th Century Fox an average of $2.33 million per episode as part of a two-year, 44-episode license agreement. If The WB also decides to dump Slayer spin-off Angel, UPN will pick up that show for two years.

Slayer mastermind Joss Whedon told Variety that he's happy about the move. "I've been dumped by my fat old ex and Prince Charming has come and swept me off my feet," he said. "I'm mostly very excited because I now have a network that cares about my show as opposed to one that insults it."

Whedon refers to remarks made by WB chief Jamie Kellner in Entertainment Weekly downplaying the Slayer's value to the network. "As long as I live, I'll never understand why Jamie Kellner said the things he said," Whedon said. "I know he's a businessman, but to insult your best show ... is unfathomable. They didn't exist [before Buffy]. It sounds wicked braggy, 'cause it is, but it's not entirely untrue."

Star Trek X Gets a Nemesis *movies*

A rumored title has popped up on the 'Net for the next Star Trek film: Star Trek X: Nemesis. A few possible plot details have popped up online as well, regarding the opening sequence. Apparently, the film opens in Alaska, birthplace of Commander Riker. Captain Picard is standing as Best Man at the wedding of Riker and Deanna Troi. Troi's mother (played by Majel Barrett Roddenberry) is in attendance, as is Mr. Hom and some other minor cameos from the series. Beverly Crusher, being the only other female cast member, is serving as Maid of Honor. According to a friend of FilmForce, there is a moment of discomfort for Captain Picard after the ceremony when some conversation turns to the subject of Dr. Crusher and himself.
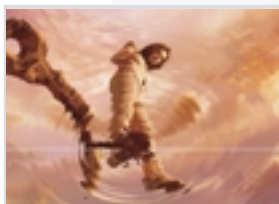
Ming-Na Talks Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within *movies*

Ming-Na recently talked to IGN FilmForce about her role as the voice of the lead character, Dr. Aki Ross, in this summer's Final Fantasy movie. "In a nutshell, she is trying to understand her role in life in relationship to what's going on in the world," the actress explains. "There's such a spiritual aspect to her character, as well as the basic emotions of her denying herself love in order to focus on her destiny. It's so large in scope to try to sum up, but she's basically trying to follow her beliefs and trying to save the Earth." She adds with a laugh: "You know, small stuff like that!"

Errata

Last month's news blurb, "Mummy Returns Plot Revealed" should read "The Scorpion King Plot Revealed." The Scorpion King is the third movie in the Mummy series.

PC Games

title	genre	publisher	release date
Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force Expansion Pack	Shooter	Activision	05/01
Mega Man Legends	Action	Capcom	05/01
CIA Operative - Solo Mission	Adventure	Valusoft	05/02
Myst 3: Exile	Adventure	Broderbund	05/07
Big Air Wakeboarding	Sports	Activision	05/07
Casino	Gambling	Activision	05/07
Worms World Party	Strategy	Interplay	05/08
Deus Ex: Game of the Year Edition	Action	Eidos	05/08
Traffic Giant	Simulation	Simon & Schuster	05/11
Disney's Atlantis: The Lost Empire - Trial by Fire	Shooter	Disney	05/11
Microsoft Train Simulator	Simulation	Microsoft	05/14
EA Sports Mania Pack 2	Sports	Electronic Arts	05/15
Arcanum	RPG	Sierra	05/15
Legends of Might and Magic	Action	3DO	05/15
Gamefest Strategy Classics	Strategy	Interplay	05/15
Pearl Harbor: Defend the Fleet	Strategy	Wizard Works	05/16
B17: Air War Over Germany	Strategy	Wizard Works	05/16
Art of Magic	Action	Bethesda	05/16
Pearl Harbor	Strategy	Simon & Schuster	05/18
Ripley's Believe it or Not	Party	Sierra	05/19
Star Trek: Dominion Wars	Action	Simon & Schuster	05/21
Real Dominoes	Board	Wizard Works	05/21
Who Wants to Be a Millionaire 3	Board	Disney	05/21
Leadfoot: Stadium Off Road Racing	Racing	Wizard Works	05/22
Desperados - Wanted Dead or Alive	Strategy	Infogrames	05/22
Microsoft Links Expansion Pack	Sports	Microsoft	05/24
Battlecruiser: Millennium	Simulation	3000 AD	05/27
Heroes Chronicles: Final Chapters	Action	3DO	05/27
911: Fire & Rescue	Action	Wizard Works	05/28
Dragon Riders	RPG	Ubi Soft	05/29
Anarchy Online	RPG	Funcom	05/30
Baldur's Gate 2: Throne of Baal	RPG	Interplay	05/31

DVDs

title	publisher	release date
Superman Boxed Set	Warner Brothers	05/01
Superman	Warner Brothers	05/01
Superman II	Warner Brothers	05/01
Superman III	Warner Brothers	05/01
Superman IV: The Quest for Peace	Warner Brothers	05/01
The Emperor's New Groove	Disney	05/01
City Slickers	MGM	05/08
What Women Want	Paramount	05/08
The X-Files: Complete Third Season	Fox	05/08
The Magnificent Seven	MGM	05/08
Quills	Fox	05/08
AntiTrust	MGM	05/15
Best in Show	Warner Brothers	05/15
Dungeons & Dragons	New Line	05/15
Pay it Forward	Warner Brothers	05/15
Red Dawn	MGM	05/15
Some Like it Hot	MGM	05/22
Requiem for a Dream	Artisan	05/22
Point Break	Fox	05/22
Stargate SG-1 Box Set	MGM	05/22
Jaws 2	Universal	05/22
Vertical Limit	Columbia	05/22
Close Encounters of the Third Kind: Collector's Edition	Columbia	05/29
A Few Good Men	Columbia	05/29
Shadow of the Vampire	Universal	05/29
Marilyn Monroe: The Diamond Collection	Fox	05/29

Dreamcast

title	genre	publisher	release date
Spider-Man	Action	Activision	05/02
Project Justice	Fighting	Capcom	05/08
Gigawing 2	Shooter	Capcom	05/08
Confidential Mission	Shooter	Sega	05/15
Exhibition of Speed	Racing	Titus	05/17
Dragon Riders	RPG	Ubi Soft	05/22
18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker	Racing	Sega	05/23
Crazi Taxi 2	Racing	Sega	05/29
Worms World Party	Strategy	Interplay	05/30
Half-Life	Shooter	Sierra	05/30
Supid Invaders	Adventure	Ubi Soft	05/31

Game Boy

title	genre	publisher	release date
Disney's Atlantis	Action	THQ	05/07
Matchbox: Emergency Patrol	Driving	THQ	05/07
Power Rangers: Time Force	Action	THQ	05/10
Razor Freestyle Scooter	Sports	Crave	05/11
Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Ages	RPG	Nintendo	05/14
Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Seasons	RPG	Nintendo	05/14
Hercules	Action	Titus	05/17
Xena	Action	Titus	05/17
Commander Keen	Action	Activision	05/17
Matt Hoffman's Pro BMX	Sports	Activision	05/18
Cat Cnst Zne 2 Ming 4 Gold	Action	Mattel	05/20
Sesame Street Sports	Sports	New Kid	05/20
Portal Runner	Action	3DO	05/20
Max Steel	Action	Mattel	05/20
X-Men: Wolverine's Rage	Action	Activision	05/24
Spider-Man 2: Enter the Sinister Six	Action	Activision	05/24

Nintendo64

title	genre	publisher	release date
Mario Party 3	Party	Nintendo	05/07

Playstation

title	genre	publisher	release date
Point Blank 3 w/Guncon	Shooting	Namco	05/01
Great Valley Racing Adventure	Racing	TDK	05/01
MLB 2002	Sports	Sony	05/08
Dance Dance Revolution w/Pad	Action	Konami	05/08
Matt Hoffman's Pro BMX	Sports	Activision	05/15
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX: Maximum Remix	Sports	Acclaim	05/22
Blast Lacrosse	Sports	Acclaim	05/23
Roswell Conspiracies: Aliens, Myths & Legends	Action	Redstorm	05/30

Playstation2

| title	genre	publisher	release date
Crazy Taxi	Racing	Acclaim	05/01
Adventures of Cookie and Cream	Action	Agetec	05/01
Tokyo Xtreme Racer: Zero	Racing	Crave	05/15
Cool Boarders 2001	Racing	Sony	05/22
Red Faction	Action	THQ	05/22
Viper Heat	Racing	Titus	05/28
Dark Cloud	RPG	Sony	05/29
Fur Fighters Revenge	Fighting	Acclaim	05/29
Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse	Action	Metro 3D	05/30
Soccer America - International Cup	Sports	Hot B USA	05/31

FROM THE MAKERS OF DRIVER 2

STUNTM★N

The makers of the beloved Driver and Destruction Derby series turn their talents to something totally different... or do they?

Remember back in 1980 when Peter O'Toole starred as the ever-so psychotic director in the movie The Stuntman? A fugitive from the law somehow snags the job as a stuntman on a movie set at just the right time. He falls for the leading lady and finds himself in a series of unpredictable stunts in which he believes he'll die, but manages to escape in the nick of time. Too obscure? Or how about Hooper, with Burt Reynolds? Too long ago? Weren't born yet? Wait, wait, I've got it...have you ever been to Knotts Berry Farm, and watched the fake shootout, where the cowboys fall from the breakable porch rails? Well then I'm quite sure you've seen a stuntman then.

Yes, the world of the stuntman is a precarious, flitting affair with danger, injury, and sometimes even with death. Which is naturally one of the central reasons we suspect smash-hit developer Reflections chose to make a PlayStation 2 title dubbed Stuntman as the follow-up to their platinum-selling Driver series. Stuntman, due in 2002, is the first next-generation title to focus on the addictive nature of Hollywood stuntmen and the lethal acts of heroism and lunacy they do for a day's wages. ▶
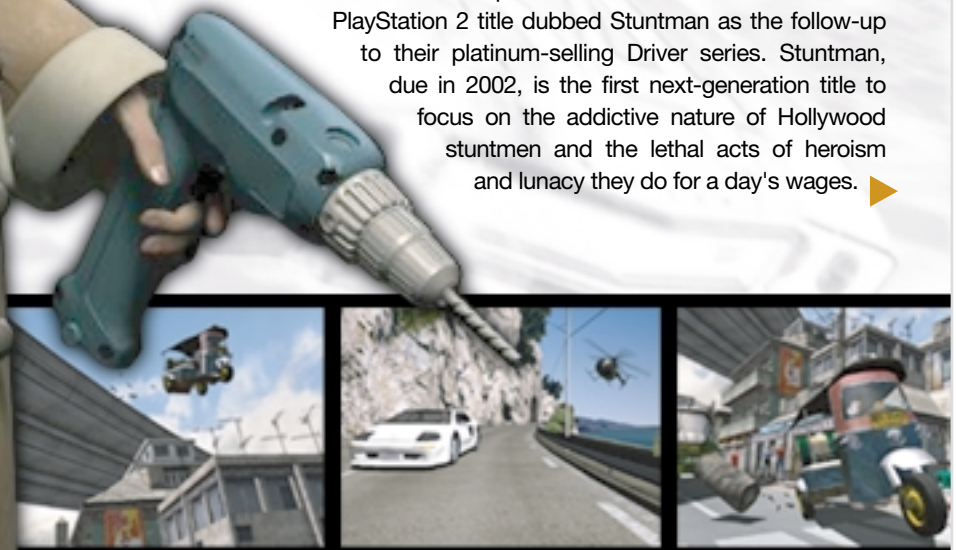
GAME INFO:

Publisher: Infogrames   **Genre:** Action - Racing   **Release:** Fall 2001

Developer: Reflections   **Players:** 1

FROM THE MAKERS OF DRIVER 2

STUNTMAN

Stuntman seems natural for the experienced developers at Reflections, who have carved their way on Sony's PlayStation with the popular and physics-heavy Destruction Derby franchise and the undeniably stylish Driver series. Working with the 32-bit system and its puny 2 MBs of RAM, Reflections' team of coders managed to cram incredible physics engines into Driver, a world in which cars flew hundreds of feet into air, and could smash into, and be smashed into, by anything.

▲ **One of the sweet cars you get to drive in the game.**

Now on the PlayStation 2, Reflections' *mad skills* at creating powerful physics engines on small systems is evolving with the bigger, more powerful consoles, capable of spitting out millions of polygons per second, reaching faster processing speeds, and providing plenty of RAM for larger scale worlds. Think of the possibilities that can happen in a world where cars jump from building to building, perform barrel rolls through exploding drums of fuselage, and perform death-defying T-bone car smashes.

In Stuntman players have the chance to live out their wildest crash-and-burn fantasies. Divided up into two modes, Arcade and Story, players can quickly jump into a series of fun single-objective stunts with no real end-all goal, or they can dig into the full-fledged Story mode with a deep backstory and character driven plot. It's pretty clear in this reporter's head that the Story mode drives to the core of the title's real efforts.

In Story mode, players acquire the role of a movie stuntman who's hired to perform a variety of stunts for numerous Hollywood films. The gameplay starts folks off gradually. First, the stunts are easily do-able and players get the feel and rhythm of the aerobatics, and the knack of each individual car. The first movies you star in are low-budget affairs, and require less of your more time-honed skills. But as the stunts increase in difficulty, danger, and scope, and the production costs rise into the hundreds of millions, the pressure builds and the skill you have developed as a Hollywood stuntman is put to the test. Eventually, players perform in multi-million dollar Hollywood action blockbusters with big name actors and directors that take place all over the world.

From the sounds of it, Reflections' game mainly takes place in the driver's seat of several powerful cars and hot rods. Much like in Destruction Derby and Driver, the cars are probably mostly going to be American, and vintage 1960s and 1970s American. If you haven't already gotten the picture yet, we're talking old American cars, such as those that appeared in TV shows like Starsky and Hutch, The Streets of San Francisco, and Hawaii Five-0. Although I don't know for sure yet, it's likely there will be newer, faster, more modern cars to drive.

The point is that Reflections is sure to imbue its traditional sense of car physics into Stuntman. Cars will skid, spin out, and slide as frequently as possible, which seems to be the natural ▶
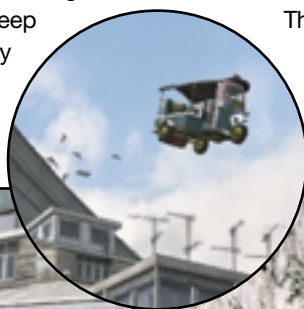
◀ **Check out the insane level of detail Reflections has managed to squeeze out of the PS2.**

thing for a nice looking but not-very-nice-handling American car to do. They will peel out, chug, and burn rubber like wild. It's no secret that Reflections has a sort of on-going love for American cars. They are the perfect vehicles for highly developed physics engine to demonstrate their skills.

Progressing through the game, players will clearly see that the objectives are defined per scene, and per movie. Each stunt comprises a set of obvious goals that must be performed perfectly in order for the scene to run smoothly and hassle free. Each movie requires perfection, or near perfection, in each and every stunt. Mess the stunt up and you'll have to do it over again. Botch it too many times, and you're out of a job, pal.

The stunts run the gamut of 180-degree spins and killer barrel rolls to more refined stunts such as perfectly timed jumps. And of course, you'll have the chance to smash into lots of other cars on screen. Bad guys need to be run down, cops need to hammer the criminals into the perfect wall, and T-bone car wrecks are guaranteed to earn you bonus points with the stunt director.

Much like in Driver and Driver 2, Stuntman enables players to get into the filmmaking swing of things. Although Infogrames hasn't clarified how exactly the movie tool works, if it's anything like the Film tool in Driver and Driver 2, you will have the chance to record your own part in the movie. Players will most likely be able to create a mini-movie out of any particular scene, including using the versatile movie camera tool to catch many different camera angles, from roving shots to crane perspectives to perfectly placed still shots.

But what might really top the game off for most gamers is the range of cars that are drive-able, and the range of extras. In Stuntman players can drive up to 13 different kinds of vehicles in as many as six different locations all over the world. Players can apparently even drive golf carts into death-defying scenarios for praise and glory. The locations are filled with photo-realistic environments such as cliff-filled beaches and wild, bustling city scenes. To help tell the story, skillfully rendered cut-scenes weave cleanly into the game to give full accounts of your rise to the highest seat of the Hollywood's elite. ▶

Taking on Hollywood is always a fun endeavor. In Stuntman, Reflections has teamed up with technical consultant Vic Armstrong, a real-life stuntman who has taken part in more than 250 movies, ranging from *Empire of the Sun* to *Terminator 2*, *Return of the Jedi* to *Blade Runner*, to *Starship Troopers*, *Tomorrow Never Dies*, and *Charlie's Angels*. Armstrong is a professional Action Unit Director and Stunt Coordinator, who has worked with some of the most well respected talents in the business. These high-ranking Hollywood movie buffs include Steven Spielberg, Ridley Scott, George Lucas and Martin Scorsese.

In many ways, Stuntman's premise sounds totally unique and original, yet the gameplay rings a familiar bell. Driving cars really fast and crashing them into things. Yep, Reflections is up to its old tricks, all right, and thankfully the developer almost always performs them convincingly well. For those who loved Destruction Derby and Driver, Stuntman promised to deliver more of the same stunning action driving scenarios in bigger, more beautiful settings, with faster, more powerful, and more realistic cars, and you even get the chance to become a Hollywood star.

-- Douglass C. Perry
IGN PS2

How to Get a Job in the Gaming Industry

Looking for an in into the lucrative world of electronic entertainment? Get some advice from the experts.
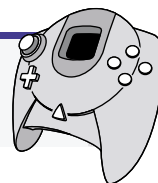
Dan Irish served as the producer on UbiSoft's Myst III: Exile.

Do you want to get paid to play videogames? Wish your rock band could cover the next version of Tony Hawk? Think you could have made Perfect Dark a better game? If you're obsessed with videogames and are looking for a job in the industry we may have the answers you're looking for. In the first part of our Breaking Into the Industry feature, we carve out a path for those interested in becoming a Producer, Musician, or Games Journalist. If you enjoy these, be sure to watch for our second edition which will focus on Programmers, Artists, and Game Testers.

Producer

Coming up with a game idea is easy; the leap from concept to creation is the difficult part, and it's the producer who makes it happen.

"Producing is like jumping off a tall building with a sheet and some duct tape and trying to figure out how to make a parachute before you make a mess on the sidewalk."
– Chris Parker, Producer, Black Isle

The Names

Martin DeRiso, Microprose	Dan Irish, UbiSoft	Chris Parker, BlackIsle
Jason Ray, 3DO	Rade Stojsavljevic, Westwood	Kudo Tsunoda, 3DO
Paul Thibault, Strategy First		

The Skills

Much of the producer's job involves coordinating the efforts of his or her staff. A good producer will therefore possess a strong sense of what is and isn't possible. The producer doesn't necessarily need expertise in any particular aspect of game design, but he or she should at least have an understanding of all of these elements. Since you'll have to coordinate the efforts of several different departments, strong communication skills are essential. You also have to genuinely enjoy interacting with other people while not being afraid to ask them to make sacrifices for the good of the project. Producers also need to have the ability to analyze profit and loss statements. There's a strong financial dimension to the producer's job, so a background in investing can help. And since any thing that goes wrong is going to be the producer's responsibility, you've got to remain poised while under pressure.

Baldur's Gate II: Throne of Baal, Chris Parker's most recent project.

The job description (if you're lucky enough to get one;) changes from company to company, but generally speaking, a producer acts as the 'hub' of a project, keeping an overview of everything associated with it from start to finish. It's not so much that the producer gets blamed for things going wrong, it's all in the way it's handled; trying to diffuse and problem-solve ahead of time, keeping the work flowing, disseminating information properly, keeping things from falling through the cracks, etc.
– Martin DeRiso, Microprose

The art of being a producer is getting your way on everything and basically designing the entire game without letting anybody except your boss know it – my designers would probably phrase that more like 'being a designer is doing your designs how you want while letting your producer think he has something to do with it'.
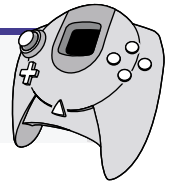– Chris Parker, Black Isle

UNPLUGGED FEATURE

How to Get a Job in the Gaming Industry
Looking for an in into the lucrative world of electronic entertainment? Get some advice from the experts.

Usually, a good producer does not require a specific talent in any one area of expertise, be it game design, story writing, or technical implementation. However a good understanding of all of these elements makes the best producer. It all boils down to what skills and value can the Producer bring to the project. There is a fine line between having a real and effective contribution and taking over someone else's job.
– Dan Irish, Producer Myst III

The Salary

Besides the sense of satisfaction you get from seeing a project through from conception to completion and working in the games industry, producers also get paid. Associate producers can make as low as 30k per year while executive producers can make anywhere from 100k to 150k per year. Most producers earn between 50k and 90k per year. It might sound profitable but the sacrifices are great as well. Producers tend to work very long hours (a few we spoke with confessed to spending up to 100 hours per week at work) and don't necessarily enjoy the same recognition that designers or artists receive among gamers. But that's not to say it's a thankless job. Speaking from experience, anyone who loves games will love working in the gaming industry, in any capacity.

The Experience

Play as many games as you possibly can. If a producer wants to make significant changes to a game in development, there has to be a good reason, and no reason is better than experience. If you don't know what's out there, it's difficult to convince others that what you're doing is right.
– Paul Thibault, Strategy First

I spent many of my college years working as a bartender. This helped me a lot in this job because I ended up taking a ton of drink orders in a really short period of time. You had to quickly prioritize the tasks, try and plan an efficient drink production path, and simultaneously interface with the customers in a pleasant manner. Believe it or not, bartending is a great training ground for being a Producer.
– Kudo Tsunoda, 3DO

Since the skill set for producers is so varied, there's no specific education track to become a producer. Still, there's a lot that the prospective producer can do to prepare. First and foremost, you've got to develop an awareness and appreciation of the gaming industry. Play lots of games and talk to the people who make them. Managerial experience is essential, as is a good writing background. Most producers start out as game testers or quality assurance folks. As you spend more time in the development world, you'll likely gain a greater facility for intuiting many of the intricacies of production. No one can tell you how to anticipate problems but, with experience, you may become more attuned to the problems you're likely to face.

A gamer knows what the gamers want. You need to read reviews, inhabit the chat rooms and go to the gaming conventions and hear what people are saying about games, both those you make and those that others make. Until you have actually been an everyday part of the team - 8 hour design meetings and eating Chinese food with them and falling asleep at your desks - you're still incomplete as producers go.
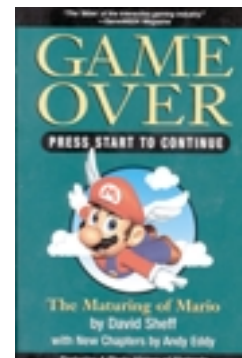– Jason Ray, 3DO

The Producer's Essential Reading List (suggested by Dan Irish)
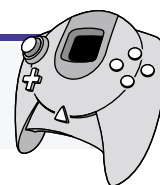
Game Over by David Sheff
Game Architecture and Design by Andrew Rollings and Dave Morris
Managing Software Development Projects by Neal Whitten
Rapid Development by Steve McConnell

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Advice to Newbies

Every producer we spoke with agreed that playing games is essential to your success. Without a deep and abiding love of games, you'll find yourself unable to compete in the field of game production. In fact, Paul Thibault of Strategy First suggests that first time producers include lots of game playing experience on their resume. In the absence of any industry experience, prospective employers will be looking to see how rabid you are about games. Once you've got your foot in the door, you'll have to be prepared to work your way up to producer. But it isn't a foregone conclusion; you'll have to work incredibly hard and take advantage of every opportunity you're given.

If you want to make it happen for yourself, then shut up and do it. If we were as classy as Dan Irish, the producer of Myst III, we might quote Goethe: "Whatever you can do, begin it. Boldness has power, genius and magic in it." In other words, get off your ass and make it happen.

Musician

Our Breaking into the Industry feature has several objectives. If you've been searching for ways to get into the videogame industry as a musician, we plan on mapping out a path to help you get there. On the other side of the coin, perhaps you haven't ever considered combining your love for music with your love for videogames. If that's the case you may be convinced otherwise. There is also the chance that you have no real musical talents, but have always loved creating racket by pounding on pots, pans, and pipes. There's something for you here as well. So, even if you're remotely interested in the audio portion of videogame creation, you stand to be intrigued.

To give you the best advice possible, we went straight to one of the most successful musicians in the videogame industry, Tommy Tallarico. Capitol Records raves, "Tallarico inspires such excitement because music this good is seldom heard in the world of video games." Whether you realize it or not you were probably excited by Tallarico's music or even his sound effects work. In cooperation with his team at Tommy Tallarico Studios he has produced the soundtracks for Earthworm Jim, MDK, Spider-Man, and many more. On top of the outstanding musical composition, Tommy Tallarico Studios also designs sound effects, such as the exquisitely accurate grinds and taps found in Tony Hawk's Pro Skater. Whether it's composing a soundtrack or creating sound effects, Tommy Tallarico Studios can accommodate. That being said, much of the information herein is based on Tommy's expert advice and will be highlighted with direct quotes.

The Names

Tommy Tallarico (MDK, Spider-man, Earthworm Jim)	Neil Voss (Tetrisphere/The New Tetris)
Chris Huelsbeck (Factor 5)	Koji Kondo (Mario/Zelda)
Nobuo Uematsu (FFX)	

Press Start in the Key of G Major

There are a few requirements if you're serious about becoming a musician within the videogame realm. First and foremost, you must love videogames as well as the music you intend to make for them. Your passion for both is your key to success. Tommy offers the comment, "If you're just getting into the industry to make a buck, look elsewhere. The best work will be done if you're passionate, you know what you're doing and you love, love, love videogames." He went as far as to make the point that most horrible videogames – in both design and sound –
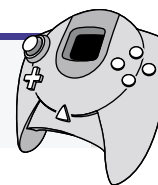
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are created by people who aren't hardcore gamers. He says, "If they were hardcore gamers, they would KNOW their product sucks."

Naturally you have to be good at composing music as well. That is especially true if you plan on working on the next-generation consoles (Xbox, GameCube, PS2) and the PC. Composers now have a much more powerful and flexible environment to work in. You used to be able to get away with short four-instrument, 15-second looping tracks, but now composers are free to do so much more. If you want to compose music for videogames, make sure you're serious about the music and not just being involved with videogames.

The First Few Notes

It's hard to know where to begin if you're determined to break into the videogame industry as a musician. Many questions arise: what instruments should you play, what styles do you have to develop, and how do you get your foot in the door? For instruments Tommy says, "Piano is the best instrument to know." It's something you can compose almost anything on and gives you the instant ability to play synthesizers, which are a necessity for composition. In videogames you just do so much work on samplers and synthesizers. All the keys you touch are converted into notes on your computer. Tommy actually took his grand piano and MIDI'ed the entire thing. So now he can create music on his real piano, and it will record on his PC. For Evil Dead he applied this to the ending credits where he composed an acoustical piano piece.

Depending on your age and situation your path into the industry will vary. If you're already a talented musician and are an adult who can live on your own, the most important thing to do is to put yourself smack-dab in the heart of the industry. Tommy illustrates the point by saying that if you live in Arkansas you're not going to be making contacts and networking. You won't be attending all the parties or the big conventions like Game Developers Conference or E3 – you just won't be making contact with 'people who know people.' And that's a huge part of the industry. You can send out all the demo tapes you want, and you may catch someone's ear, but it's not nearly as potent as living within the industry. Tommy says, "This industry is all about networking and who you know. If you're in San Francisco and you're meeting these people in person, or you're in L.A. and you walk into Activision and THQ, and you talk to those people there, that is just so much more powerful than sending someone a demo tape."

In Tommy's case he came to know so many talented people from Virgin Interactive who went on to work for big companies like Midway, Capcom, Electronic Arts, Namco, and others. So he has this network of contacts and friends who are constantly recommending his studio for work. Despite the fact that Tommy and his team are very talented, it is extremely important that he has these contacts. Word of mouth is extremely powerful in the videogame industry. Tommy emphasizes this saying, "My biggest tip to anyone who is serious about getting into the games industry now is to put yourself where it is. And that goes for any industry. If you're a photographer, for example, you better be in L.A. or New York. If you want to write country music, you better be in Nashville. You're not going to be a successful country musician if you're in Saskatchewan, Canada. Sure there's always the one in one-million people who [can do it elsewhere], but why go against those odds?" So, you really have to do your best to become a living part of the industry.

If you're still an aspiring musician and aren't an adult yet, you have even more time to plan for all this. Most importantly (and obviously), you have to strive to become a talented musician with strong compositional skills. Again, videogame technology has reached a point where simple looping soundtracks aren't used anymore.
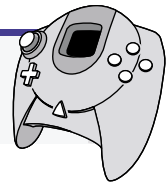
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Being a videogame musician requires that you are both a talented composer as well as a hardcore gamer. Aside from that fact, though, you should learn all you can about the software and hardware behind the music. Sequencers are a huge part of creating game soundtracks. It's important that you find one you can use and learn all of its intricacies. Samplers are also a necessity if you want to have a competitive edge. So get the gear you find is the most comfortable, stick with it, and become an authority on it.

It's also very important that you develop your own styles while at the same time exploring many different kinds of musical fashions. Videogames demand so many different kinds of styles, and if you want to increase your chances of landing jobs you need to be able to switch gears if necessary. However, it's a complicated and delicate balance. You don't want to spread yourself thin in too many genres. You should always have your own style, because if you don't you have little leverage over your competitors. If you become best at orchestral composition, then you can certainly stick with it and try to pick up all the orchestral work there is available. However, if you're style is orchestral and you can compose techno music on top of that, you'll be that much more valuable. That's the balance: being brilliant with at least one style – your own style – but also possessing the ability to accommodate other fashions.

Essential Gear

If you're not familiar with all the gear and gadgetry used within the industry, you might be surprised to find out you don't really need a massive amount of technical knowledge or a warehouse of gear to create soundtracks for software. The main things you need are a synthesizer, sequencer, and sampler.

• **Synthesizer/Keyboards** – "Synths," as they're called, are a lot like pianos. Only they are digital and can produce a wide range of sounds, letting you manipulate much of it on the fly, among other things. By plugging your synthesizer into your computer, you can record into your sequencer of choice. No synthesizer is necessarily better than the other is. You'll want one that is flexible and comfortable for you to play on.

• **Samplers** – Sampling is basically the backbone of synthesizers. Instead of a real stringed instrument or drum a sampler provides a digital version of it. The benefit of a sampler, though, is that you have unlimited access to new sounds, whereas a keyboard/synth usually only has limited capacity. There are people constantly working hard to reproduce the sound of choirs, cellos, or any other number of instruments so they can be used digitally. These are essentially what the "samples" are, and you can buy thousands of them on CDs with even more coming out every month. Because of this very reason Tommy says, "I've had my Roland sampler for 10 years now, and I still use it everyday." Thus, having a sampler is extremely important as you have access to every kind of instrument you can imagine. Some popular sampler brands include E-MU, Roland, and Akai. If you're into computers mostly, Gigasampler is a card you can plug into your PC and use just like a physical sampler as well. Every musician has different taste, so your choice should revolve around your personal preference.

• **Sequencers** – Sequencers are essentially a digital recorder. For this reason, there is no degradation of the sound quality because you are recording digital audio in the first place. This software is used to record track-by-track and layer them on top of each other. For instance you may record your bass line, then your drum track, then some techno-beats, etc. Two popular sequencers are Cakewalk for the PC and Digital Performer for the
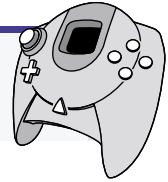
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Mac. However, just because they are the most popular does not mean they are your only choice. There are many different programs you can choose from. Just be sure to get one that makes the most sense to you, and once you do, learn it like the back of your hand. If you're unsure about what's best for you, download some free samples off the internet or go to a local retail outlet like Guitar Center and ask to test out some of the software. The main point is that you choose one that feels good to you and become an expert at using it.

With all this software and hardware, you can do the majority of your work. You don't need a $1 million studio to compose great music. And, when the time comes that you do need giant mixers or other expensive equipment, you can rent studios by the hour. Or if you work for a big company like EA or Interplay they'll have the equipment in-house. If you need to purchase any of this stuff, take things slowly and don't go overkill. It's what you do with the equipment that counts.

Breaking In

When you have finally brushed up on your compositional skills and you've practiced day-in and day-out with all your gear, you'll be ready to start creating your demo tape and résumé. This is going to be one of the hardest things you do, because you have to try to choose your best works. Tommy advises, "The best thing you do is put together a demo tape which has three or four of your best songs that you could ever compose. But don't put something you think other people will like on the demo tape. I get so many demo tapes which have one dance song, one orchestral song, one rock song, one techno song, and one country song…and it's like, what the f— do you do!? I always tell people to put on your demo, your favorite kind of music that you like to write. If you were to do an album, what would be on it? That's when you get people's most passionate stuff, the stuff that comes from their soul."

Hopefully by the time you've created your demo tape you will have started to network and make contacts. If you haven't, you need to try your best to do it. If you're incapable of living at the center of the industry, you should at least try to make it to big events like Game Developers Conference and E3, which happen once a year. Also, send out hundreds of demo tapes – get them to every major and minor publisher you can. If you are fortunate enough that you can move out to the west coast in a place like L.A. or San Francisco, it is imperative that you make your presence known. Offer to take one of your favorite composers to lunch, get yourself invited to parties; do whatever your have to do to meet people. If you have to personally knock on the door of Electronic Arts or Tommy Tallarico Studios, then do it. The fact is, if you can get someone to take a demo tape directly out of your hand after your greet them you've made that much more of a difference.

By placing yourself at the heart of it all, you also drastically increase your chances of being noticed. When Tommy was 21 years old he decided to drive out West from the East coast and go to Hollywood. He had been playing piano since he was three and was determined to live among the rockstars and be one himself. When he got there it wasn't quite like he envisioned. He asked some bum where Mickey Mouse lived, and the haggard man pointed him down to Orange County. When he got there he got a job at Guitar Center selling keyboards, and his very first customer was a producer from Virgin Interactive. Tommy was wearing a Turbo Grafx 16 shirt so the producer immediately noticed him. One thing led to another and Tommy got a job testing games for Virgin. They didn't have a dedicated "music guy" so he offered to do any work they had for free if they'd let him. Finally Virgin let him work on Prince of Persia, and everyone was immediately taken with his skills. From there on he became Virgin's dedicated "music guy." And now, after moving on he is in charge of his own studio, which
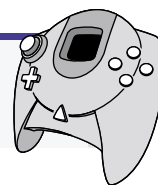
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is the biggest multimedia post-production house on the planet.

The moral of the story is that had Tommy never ventured out to California, he probably wouldn't have walked down the same successful path. So, while it's not suggested you sleep on a beach or take advice from bums, you must aggressively try to get your foot in the door any way you have to. One very easy way to do this is to try out sound designing first. Tommy points out, "In audio, everyone wants to be the musician and the composer. But the reality that there is a huge, huge need and want for people who are great sound designers. [Tommy Tallarico Studios] did 30 games last year – 80% of them were just sound design only. Like Tony Hawk, for example. They had all the music licensed. They called me up and asked for sound effects." As you know, that means that four out of every five audio jobs in the industry are sound design! So, that's a great way to get your foot in the door, make contacts, and get your name out there.

To do sound design all you need is Sound Forge on the PC, a portable DAT, and a good microphone. Once you have this equipment you just need to get out, gather sounds of all kinds, and practice manipulating and editing them with Sound Forge. Get into the habit of gathering as many different 'takes' of sounds as you can. For instance, if you have to produce the sound of a hard-soled boot stepping on broken glass, you should record as many different sounds as possible. Use a broken light bulb, a crystal glass, a broken windshield and try different boots with different people in them – whatever you can find, try it. That's part of the process, and in the end you can let the producer decide what's best from all those choices. It is also important to bear in mind that there are space limitations. For some things like the sound of an engine or skateboards moving across a surface you must practice making the audio loop, as opposed to recording one-mile's worth of sound. Depending on the available space, your choices will vary, but practice creating loops as concise and accurate as possible. If you can make a two-second loop, then stick with it. Tommy comments, "[Sound design] is more fun than composing music sometimes. You don't have to please a million people. If you do a great sound of slamming into a fence, people know it. They're not going to say, 'Well, that doesn't really sound like someone slamming into a fence.' [You can say,] 'What the f— are you talking about!? I slammed myself into a fence!' So, sometimes it's a little easier." Clearly, sound design is a great way to get into the industry. There's a great demand for it and you get plenty of money doing it.

The Payoff

Once you hit the big-time, you'll naturally be ecstatic about your success, but everyone needs to make a living. How much buck do you get for your bang? It varies greatly throughout the industry and there are two different work styles.

In-house Staff

If you're an in-house employee you only work solely for that company, you have hours to work by, and pretty much have to be prepared to deal with everything that comes your way. The advantages are, of course, that you get a paycheck every week, a benefits package, and all that secure corporate stuff. However, you'll probably never become ultra successful because you only work on the limited number of projects the company chooses for you. Sound designers make from $35,000 - $75,000, averaging around $50,000. In-house composers and/or music directors usually make between $40,000 - $125,000, averaging around $65,000.
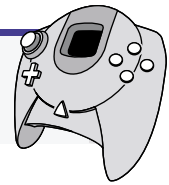
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Independent Contractor
Contractors get to live by a set of their own rules. You choose what and how many projects you want to take on, set your own hours, and usually work out of your own house. If you are able to manage many different projects at once, you can pretty much make as much money as you want. The disadvantages, of course, are a lack of consistent paychecks, no dental plans, missing out on company picnics, etc. For pay, you can set your own rates, but most musicians charge anywhere from $250 - $1,500 minutes of music, averaging around $750. If you're an independent sound designer your fees may range from $7,500 to $40,000 depending on the number of sounds you've provided. The average for that is around $20,000.

So, whether you choose sound design or composition, you stand to make a very decent living. It's important to note, though, that if you're an in-house employee or an outside contractor you should ask for a bonus/royalty fee based on the number of units sold. This can drastically increase your bank account if you produce for a really successful game.

With all this knowledge in-mind, you have almost everything you need to map out a path to break into the industry. The rest relies on your talents and ambitions. We wish you well on your endeavors.

Games Journalist

"I suspect it's a bit like [sex], which is only fun for amateurs."
– Hunter S. Thompson, on writing.

Perhaps the most sought-after job in the games industry, at least among hopeful videogame fans, is that of the editor. An editor, for the purposes of this feature, is someone who brings information about games from the people who make them to the people play them, whether it be via the Internet, print, broadcast, or whatever medium. It's not the clearest of job descriptions, encompassing a heavy grab-bag of duties – writing, research, Photoshop, video editing, graphic design, cocktail-party schmoozing, technical jiggery-pokery, the ability to function without sleep for long periods of time, and plenty more – but somehow, it's always seen as the job where you get to play games for a living. That's far from the truth, but perhaps it's just true enough to make it worthwhile.

So how do you get to play games for a living? We decided the best way to answer the question would be empirical research: we went to some of the gaming industry's most respected figures and asked what they think you need to make a living in this dodge, the better to inspire or discourage those of you who might hope one day to replace them.
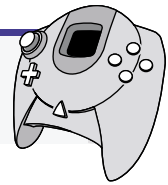
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The Names

Gazunta, (freelancer)
Dan "Shoe" Hsu (editor-in-chief, Electronic Gaming Monthly)
Sam Kennedy (news editor, Official US PlayStation Magazine)
James Mielke (review crew, Electronic Gaming Monthly)

David S. J. Hodgson (writer)
Patrick Klepek (site manager, Gaming Age)
John Ricciardi (freelancer)
Everyone at IGN.com

The Salary

Start out and make $25,000 a year. The average is generally somewhere in the $30k-$60k range.

The Skills

Write
"In the end, the thing that got me in the door was a well-written cover letter. I don't have a writing or editing background, and I didn't take journalism courses in college (my resume wasn't even looked at). It grabbed someone's attention at EGM...and that's all it took! Lucky me."
– Dan Hsu, Editor-in-Chief, Electronic Gaming Monthly.

"Concentrate on the strength of your writing by studying the style of professional web sites and magazine publications, and attempt to incorporate it into your own."
– Patrick Klepek, Site Manager, Gaming-Age.

"I guess the best piece of advice I can give to budding freelancers eager to break into the industry is to write. You won't get any money from it at first, but you will get your name out there, make plenty of contacts and a earn great amount of experience."
– Cameron "Gazunta" Davis, Freelancer.

Has the point been hammered home yet? The ability to write is of paramount importance. The truth is that game editors are not paid to play games. They're paid to write about playing games, which is something entirely different. Whether you can parry an entire Shinkuu Hadou-ken or turtle-trot for the better part of an afternoon is a distant second to your ability to string one word next to another, and in the age of the Internet, you can be three thousand miles from a prospective employer and still impress them with a strong writing sample.

Learn to be versatile when it comes to describing games. It's easy to run out of original concepts and metaphors when you write about the same thing every day – ask any sportswriter. Being able to compress or expand your thoughts is important, too. In a given month, a print editor may have to write multi-page features, 100-word capsule reviews, and everything in between. You should work on bulleting your opinions into a compact space, or filling in the details between major points. Online, you have all the space in the world, which demands that you maintain coherence and flow in a lengthy piece, but your audience has a questionable attention span, meaning that it's important not to get lost going too deep into a game.

There are plenty of other practical skills that are useful to the would-be editor: Internet searching, graphic design, and computer programs like Word, Photoshop, QuarkXpress, and Premiere. An editor's grasp of Photoshop you can pick up in a few days, though. Writing is a more valuable ability by miles.

Educate Yourself
Game editors have no uniform level of education – the industry includes everything from master's degree holders to high school dropouts. However, it's good sense regardless of what career goal you might have to get a college education, and John Ricciardi points out that you're only young once. "Build up the necessary skills while you still have the chance (especially if you're in or about to enter college). Take plenty of English courses, especially ones related to creative writing and journalism, and play as many games from as many genres on as many different platforms as you can." After all, you have a lot more game-playing time when you're in school than when you're working a full-time job.

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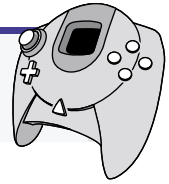
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David Hodgson makes a very important observation, too: "A degree in a related field helps - it's something to fall back on when the game industry experiences a 'transitional period' (such as now, for example)." A bachelor's degree isn't a bad set of credentials for getting a job in the straight world, however afraid you might be of that prospect.

Know Games
"Knowing games is essential. Play old games – knowledge of at least the 8- and 16-Bit eras is pretty valuable. Knowing what's going on in the industry is important too, so be sure to read up on daily news and happenings on sites like this one (that plug was entirely unintentional, I swear)." John Ricciardi hits the nail on the head there, and the recommendation is certainly appreciated. Games don't exist in a vacuum – they're part of a larger world both past and present, and it adds depth and credibility to your work to be able to talk about how they relate to the rest of that world.

Act Like a Human
We know that most gamers aren't famous for their social skills, but the ability to work with other people is a must. Editors aren't just locked in an office playing games – they have to interface with developers, publishers, public relations people, other journalists, and more. Big tips and exclusive stories won't go to editors whose name nobody knows, but to those who are well-known and well-liked. "It's a very close industry," says Official PlayStation Magazine's Sam Kennedy, "How you handle yourself can be very important."

Be Lucky
"Quite frankly, it's a really hard industry to get into (does the phrase "snowball's chance in Hell" do it justice?), and I'm pretty lucky how I managed to get in without having even tried. For someone looking to get in from the outside, the best trait you could possess is patience."
– James Mielke

Yes, luck is a factor – sometimes the only one. Logic applies as well, however, as many editors' stories prove. You have to be in the right place at the right time, but there are plenty of steps you can take to make sure you have some control over where and when that is.

The Origin Story
"After graduation, I resolved to write a fanzine, which I did with the help of Bryn Williams [now at GameSpy]. It was called PlayStation Frenzy, and was mostly awful - in black and white and I sold 50 copies to friends. Then I picked up the first issue of a new game magazine - called Maximum - published by the now defunct EMAP Images. They were looking for a staff writer. I promptly sent in a couple of witty sample reviews, and a copy of the fanzine, both to EMAP and Future Publishing. Those bastards at Future never called, but Richard Leadbetter did. Richard was (and still is) a well-regarded veteran British game journalist, and worked together with "Jazza" Rignall before he came over to the States (and ended up with IGN). Anyway, both Richard and Gary Harrod (the Art Director) liked the fanzine, and hired me for the princely sum of 11,000 pounds a year."
– David Hodgson, formerly of everywhere.

"I decided I'd throw together a few game reviews and then try to show them off to some of the bigger magazines out there in hopes that they might decide to pick me up for some freelance work. Fortunately, I managed to get the attention of a Mr. Wes Nihei, the editor in chief of Gamepro magazine (and one of the nicest guys in the industry), who agreed to meet with me at WCES [Consumer Electronics Show] in '94 or '95 (I forget which). He liked my stuff, and so he signed me up to do some freelance for Gamepro."
– John Ricciardi

Nobody is simply given a job in the industry out of the blue. To one degree or another, it demands a conscious step to make yourself known and show a prospective employer that you're worth taking a chance on. If you're lucky, you won't even know that they're looking, but as a rule, you have to force the issue a little. To do that, you have to know someone...

This Month In Dreamcast

The month of May can be considered a holy month for video-gamers everywhere. Whether you're a videogaming scrub or a high-profile developer, gamers of all walks of life look forward to the world's biggest videogame event of the year: the Electronic Entertainment Expo better known by its shortened moniker, E3. And last year, despite the rather ignorant reports of several mainstream publications (*COUGH* LA Times *COUGH*), SEGA stole the show with its enormous booth, Space Channel 5 shows, and, of course, tons of games.

Man, how much has changed since then.

It's going to be a lot different this year for SEGA. No go-go dancer girls, a much smaller booth, and instead of featuring third party games on the Dreamcast, you'll be seeing a lot of SEGA titles on other platforms. But one thing, and probably the most important thing, will remain the same – lots of new games for the Dreamcast. And that's what I'm looking most forward to, because it's going to be the last time we see the Dreamcast at E3.

ANTHONY CHAU

Feature Story: An interview with Sonic Adventure 2's director, Takashi Iizuka. pg. 24.

EDITOR'S TOP 5

1. Phantasy Star Online
2. Super Dodge Ball (GBA)
3. Quake II (PC)
4. Crazy Taxi
5. Virtual On Oratorio Tangram

EDITOR'S MOST WANTED

1. Phantasy Star Online V. 2
2. Virtual On Force (Arcade)
3. Headhunter
4. New Legends (Xbox)
5. Mark of the Wolves

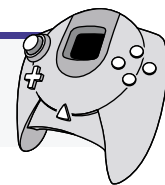**Sonic Adventure 2** pg.28

Worms World Party pg.30

IN THIS ISSUE

DREAMCAST FEATURE

Interview: Takashi Iizuka
IGN DC talks with Sonic Adventure 2's director.

When Sonic the Hedgehog released way back on the Genesis, it changed the format of platform gaming. Before Sonic appeared, every platform aspired to be Mario-esque in platforming mechanics. Sonic changed all that, offering lots of blazing speed, fresh visuals, and an attitude. We have thanked Yuji Naka constantly for his contributions and he has rightfully deserved all the accolades. There is a rather unfortunate result of being Yuji Naka; as head of Sonic Team, he has to oversee so many innovative videogame projects. Thankfully, Yuji Naka has some extremely talented wizards in charge of each Sonic Team project and perhaps none is more important than Sonic Team USA Director Takashi Iizuka, who is currently handling what could be the last Sonic game for the Dreamcast – Sonic Adventure 2.

While Takashi Iizuka may not have enjoyed the spotlight attention of Yuji Naka, Iizuka-san has quite a history in the videogame industry as he has contributed much to the Sonic series. He started working for SEGA of Japan in 1992 and a year later, he came to the US to work on Sonic 3 and Sonic/Knuckles for the Genesis. After completing both projects he went back to Japan where we became the main designer for the legendary Saturn title, NiGHTs. While working on his next Saturn title, Sonic Jam, he came up with the concept of Sonic Adventure and while writing up the spec document of Sonic Adventure, he supported the efforts in making Sonic R and Sonic 3D Blast. As the director and main designer, he introduced Sonic to a 3D world and with the success of the title, it was only natural for him to head up the direction of Sonic Adventure 2. Sonic Adventure 2 is not only the 10th anniversary of Sonic but possibly the last Sonic game on the Dreamcast, and that would seem to put a lot of pressure on Sonic Team USA. However, throughout our very pleasant interview with Takashi Iizuka, he was excited about the development of Sonic Adventure 2 and seemed anything but stressed

IGNDC: How long have you been working on Sonic Adventure 2?

Takashi Iizuka: Well, Sonic Team USA, who is developing the title in the US, was formed two years ago. For the first six months, we worked on the localization of Sonic Adventure for the US. So about a year and a half.

IGNDC: How complete is Sonic Adventure 2 right now, percentage wise?

TI: (smiles) Almost done! It's well over 90% done.

IGNDC: The original Sonic Adventure had a good mix of fast platforming action sequences with puzzle-like adventure gameplay. For Sonic Adventure 2, is the balance the same between action and adventure or does SA2 lean more to one style of play than the other?

TI: For SA, the basis of the game was to incorporate the fast action of the Genesis/MegaDrive Sonic games with a lot of story elements. For SA2, it's reverted back to concentrate more on the action of the game rather than the story. So there's a lot more action in SA2 than the original. In the original SA, you had the quick action sequences combined with field action sequences (exploration, item hunting, etc). In SA2, we mixed the sequences depending on each character: for example, Sonic has the fast paced action sequences, Tails as the shooting sequences, and Knuckles has the exploration – item finding sequences. Also, rather than relying on a radar to find items, the Knuckles portion of the game is more hint based. *(continued on next page)*
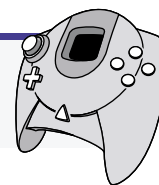
Interview: Takashi Iizuka (cont'd.)
IGN DC talks with Sonic Adventure 2's director.

IGNDC: Percentage wise, how much does each character in Sonic 2 appear in the game? I know the game revolves around Sonic, but will it be similar to SA where the major characters get larger gaming portions while the smaller characters get supporting roles?

TI: For the story, it's divided into two equal parts: Hero and Dark. And the story is divided equally among the three characters for each side. As far as the stages and action, one character doesn't have more action sequences than the others.

IGNDC: So it's not like how it was in SA, where Big the Cat and E-102 had small roles...

TI: Right, it's not like Sonic takes up 50% of the game, then Tails has 25%... it's divided up pretty evenly.

IGNDC: Will we see any of the old characters from Sonic Adventure?

TI: Uh... good question (laughs). Amy is very well involved in the story but unfortunately she's not playable.

IGNDC: Will there be online features for Sonic Adventure 2?

TI: Right now we're still in the planning stages of our online features, and while it hasn't been completed yet, basically the player will play the game and once they complete a stage or level, they'll receive a certain ranking. And through the Internet, they'll be able to upload their score and see how they rank against other players on a worldwide basis.

IGNDC: Having played through the game numerous times, we've been able to see the big changes in Sonic Adventure 2 in terms of the faster gameplay and improved frame rate. What other major improvements have been made in Sonic Adventure 2 over Sonic Adventure?

TI: (laughs) There are so many, it's pretty hard to answer that. Obviously we wanted to make Sonic Adventure 2 run at 60 frames per second and design the stages so that when you play the game, you feel like you're going a lot faster. And then, the two-player versus modes was the next big benchmark after we established the 60 frames per second.

And for the future of Sonic's actions, instead of blazingly running through a stage, we've given him more actions so he's not just constantly running. So he'll run, then he'll grind on a rail, then he'll spin dash into an obstacle, etc. It's not just about running fast; we wanted to create a "tempo" for the action.

IGNDC: Speaking of the two-player mode, right now in our preview version, there are three versus games – Sonic Vs, Shadow, Tails Vs. Dr. Eggman, and Knuckles Vs. Rouge. Are there any more mini-games planned and will other characters be able to battle each other (i.e. Sonic Vs Tails)?

TI: Ahh... well, that's your preview version (smiles). For that preview version, we've only included one stage per versus game. With the full version, you'll see a lot more stages for each versus mode. I really can't say too much about the versus games yet, but there are two other versus modes we're thinking about incorporating outside of the three that you've played.

DREAMCAST FEATURE
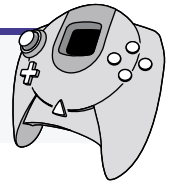
Interview: Takashi Iizuka (cont'd.)
IGN DC talks with Sonic Adventure 2's director.

IGNDC: Hmm... is there a four player mode in the works?

TI: (Eyes widen and laughs) No.

IGNDC: Well, you know I had to ask. Okay... Chaos. Now, we've heard there's a new Chao raising system. We've seen online movies of Sonic petting Chaos and Chaos displaying new animations, but beyond that, we don't know too much about the Chaos in SA2. Can you go into the Chao raising system further – is it still similar to the system in SA, does it still use the VMU?

TI: (shuffles papers) Well, it's a little bit too early to release all the information on Chaos, but I'll touch upon a few things. In Sonic Adventure, the Chaos were a relatively neutral entity. To remain consistent with Sonic Adventure 2, where the game is divided between the Hero side and Dark side, depending how you raise your Chao, you can raise it to become a Dark Chao or a Hero Chao. And each Hero or Dark Chao will display different animations. For example, when a Hero or Dark Chao goes to sleep, they will display different mannerisms... you'll definitely see something different.

In Sonic Adventure 2 we've basically tripled the volume of Chaos. In terms of the combinations, you'll see a whole lot of different Chaos for the new A-Life system. When compared to the Chaos in SA, we had one program running all the Chaos' different actions. In SA2, we've incorporated a "socialization program" of sorts; so you'll see Chaos interacting with other Chaos differently – they kind of grow up together and their personalities will be altered accordingly. It's a little more unique in that aspect.

IGNDC: So what happens when you put a Hero Chao and a Dark Chao together? Or can you place them together in the same room?

TI: Oh yes, you'll definitely see situations like that. What the Hero Chao and the Dark Chao will do to each other... that's something you're going to have to see for yourself.

IGNDC: The City Escape level for Sonic and Radical Highway level for Shadow are fantastic, but I noticed these levels have similar landmarks found in San Francisco (the Golden Gate Bridge in Radical Highway, the really steep hills with cable cars in City Escape). Are most of the levels in SA2 based off certain real-life landmarks or landscapes?

TI: Since Sonic Team USA is residing around San Francisco and the Bay Area, we see a lot of the beautiful images here in San Francisco everyday. And we wanted to apply those elements in the game. Of course, the world of SA2 is a fictional world, so our intention is not to create a simulation of San Francisco but we're really inspired by what we see in the city.

As for the other stages, since we came to the US, we've gone on various trips to places in the US like Yosemite Park. Since most of our research [in level design] was predominately done in San Francisco, and that fact that we're developing SA2 in the US, we wanted to make SA2 have more of an American flavor... you'll see a lot of the settings inspired by America.

(continued on next page)
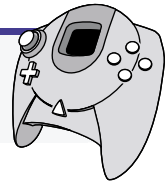
Interview: Takashi Iizuka (cont'd.)
IGN DC talks with Sonic Adventure 2's director.

IGNDC: When playing with Dr. Eggman (Robotnik in the US) and Tails, we really enjoyed the shooting-action sequences, but we're curious if either characters get out of their vehicles or control other vehicles?

TI: Basically, both characters will start off in their respective walker machines. As you progress through the game, you'll be able to pick up special level up items that'll enable you to level up your walker, allowing them to perform different actions.

IGNDC: Traditionally, when you defeat enemies, the little animals pop-out. But I've noticed in SA2, when you defeat the enemies, instead of the animals, these glowing tubes appear. What are they for?

TI: Well this time in SA2, the enemies you encounter aren't really created or sent out by Dr. Eggman (Robotnik). Those are actually "military" robots so they don't have animals inside those machines. I can't say what they're for right now but keep collecting them – there's a definite use for them. Specifically, with Tails and Dr. Eggman (Robotnik), when you do collect those tubes you'll get some health back if you've been damaged.

IGNDC: Speaking of new enemies, when you start off the game, Sonic escapes from this military chopper with the "Gun" logo. And in various screenshots, we've seen other robots and enemies with this "Gun" logo. Is this the new evil mastermind of SA2?

TI: Well, the real enemies for each character are their opposites: Sonic and Shadow, Tails and Dr. Eggman (Robotnik), and Knuckles and Rouge. Beyond that, there's definitely something else, something bigger.

IGNDC: What will be your next project after Sonic Adventure 2 (maybe, NiGHTS)?

TI: Uh, I can't think that far (smiles). Well, I can't tell you any real details, but my plan is to stay in the US and if possible, work on another Dreamcast project.

IGNDC: And just to know, what is your favorite game of all time?

TI: (Eyes widen and takes a deep breath) Wow, that's hard. For action games, I really liked Mario 64, and when it comes to RPG's I enjoy the Final Fantasy series. But out of all the ones I've worked on, I definitely like NiGHTS the most.

IGNDC would like to thank Takashi Iizuka very much for his time, as well as Keith Palmer, Assistant Director for Sonic Team USA who helped us translate much of the Interview. As if we weren't excited about Sonic Adventure 2, with all this new information, June 19th can't come any sooner!
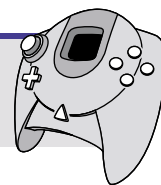
Sonic Adventure 2

The last Sonic game on the Dreamcast aims to go out with a bang.

SEGA supporters are still recovering from the reality that the Dreamcast is dying. Despite finally getting the killer RPGs, awesome online games, and a pretty bright future considering the 30 quality titles coming through on the DC, it's hard to be content that one of the best video game systems will be saying farewell too soon. Yet, even with all the hardship, disillusionment, and sadness we feel, one look at Sonic Adventure 2 makes you forget all the suffering that SEGA has been through, taking you back to what many of us have forgotten: how much fun a real game can be.

GAME INFO	
Publisher	Sega
Developer	Sonic Team
Genre	Action
Players	2t
Release	06/19/01

Our current preview disc gives us a glimpse of the five other characters that'll be playable in Sonic Adventure 2: the three Heroes - Sonic, Tails, and Knuckles - and their evil counterparts from the Dark side - Shadow, Dr. Robotnik, and Rouge. Each character had one level playable, which had me longing for A LOT MORE! Each Hero character shared similar abilities with a certain Dark character; Sonic and Shadow demonstrate their dashing prowess, Tails and Dr. Robotnik both use land-walker machines, and Knuckles and Rouge demonstrate gliding and digging abilities. Of course, being called Sonic Adventure 2 the game mainly revolves around Sonic and he has no trouble demonstrating his speed - it wouldn't be right without having a scene where Sonic runs down the wall of a building at full velocity. Sonic looks faster than ever, especially since Sonic Team has added new vapor trail-like effects when he is at full speed. Sonic always has some new tricks up his sleeve: he can now grind metal rails a la Jet Grind Radio style and Sonic can grab and swing around parallel bars. When swinging around these bars, if he releases at the proper moment (indicated by a red aura trail) he'll be able to launch himself high into the air.

For those that fell in love with the adorable Chaos in Sonic Adventure, they will play a major role in Sonic Adventure 2. While our preview build didn't allow us access to any Chaos, the small animals that give Chaos their abilities are still present, as well as robotic Chaos, complete with wind up winch. These small robots give tutorials throughout the level, but they can also be picked up and treated just like a real Chao. It's hilarious when you do this to a robotic Chao, as it'll start screaming "I'm not a normal Chao, put me down!" And of course, there are all sorts of SEGA ads and propaganda, whether it's huge Phantasy Star Online billboards, or ads for a "Chao In Space" DVD or the milk parody "Got Ring?"

One of the biggest additions is the two-player battle mode as each hero and their dark counterpart face-off in different versus modes. Sonic and Shadow race through a level in classic Sonic 2 style, Tails and Robotnik battle it out in a very Power Stone-like fashion, and Knuckles and Rouge try to find all three pieces of the Master Emerald in the huge adventure level. While there was only one versus game for each of the three modes, Sonic Team USA is planning a lot more arenas and different battle modes. We highly recommend you read the extremely informative interview with Sonic Team USA director, Takashi Iizuka, for a whole wealth of information. Chances are, you'll feel June 19th can't come any sooner.
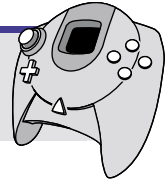
Crazy Taxi 2

Take classic gameplay and add a couple twists and a heck of a lot of new material, and you get lots of fun.

With SEGA's switch from hardware to software, there are many of you who have foolishly traded Dreamcast systems in for whatever cash or credit you could pawn, and decided to swtich to PS2. Those of you who have done this, it is too late for you. However, if you're on the verge of making that terrible decision to drop your Dreamcast, don't... DON'T make the mistake... at least not yet. Because among the splendid titles coming out for the Dreamcast this year, is the one that I have been zealously waiting for. So get ready to peel off that second layer of skin on your thumb and make early appointments to your acupuncture specialist when you start getting that sharp pain between your thumb and index finger, Crazy Taxi 2 is coming soon!

Crazy Taxi 2's main gameplay hasn't changed much - pick up people and haul ass to the target destination. However, you can now pick up a group of customers to get the huge payoff, but beware - just because they come in a group doesn't mean they're always going to the same place. The city is REALLY dense now – there aren't too many straight-aways unless you're driving on the Brooklyn Bridge. For those that haven't been keeping up with the latest CT2 word, Crazy Taxi 2's city is based off New York City. And that means if ytou were a normal cabbie, getting from place to place might take several minutes to navigate all the turns, side streets and alleyways. Perhaps this is why the game doesn't feel quite as fast as the original. Crazy Taxi had several straight roads where you can make use of the Crazy Dash and Limit Cut techniques without worry. In the levels I've played in Crazy Taxi 2, there aren't as many opportunities.

Speaking of Crazy Taxi techniques, veteran players will appreciate the improved shifting when using both Crazy Dash and Limit Cuts. Die hard fans have probably encountered what I like to call the "transmission jump" that happens when you try mixing a Crazy Dash and Limit Cut very quickly. While this "transmission jump" was pretty cool because it allowed you to perform standing jumps, it was also an annoyance since it would often slow you down. That has been fixed in Crazy Taxi 2 where using Crazy Dashes and Limit Cuts can be done without any sudden breaks in speed. Taxis all control pretty similar to the ones in the original though the drifiting in this early build was kind of spotty; sometimes when I attempted a drift it didn't work, and sometimes when I was just trying to stop, it would drift like crazy.
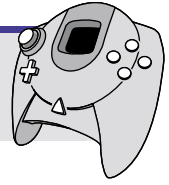
Crazy Taxi 2 is shaping up to be another must-have Dreamcast title, so look out for our review of this game when we receive our final review version in late May.

GAME INFO	
Publisher	Sega
Developer	Hitmaker
Genre	Racing
Players	4
Release	May 2001

DREAMCAST PREVIEW

Worms World Party
Those feisty annelids are back to heap more pain against local friends and online.

Ahh the magic of Team 17's Worms. You simply have to love Worms, even if you positively despise worms. How's that? It has to do with the worms in Worms being somewhat different from the kind of worms that you'd find under ground. The worms of Worms are of the cartoon variety, with their tiny worm-sized minds set on nothing but worm warfare. And yes, this paragraph, and indeed this whole Worms World Party preview, uses the word "worm" entirely too much.

If you haven't played Worms in some variation, get off the bloody internet and off your fat ass, head down to your local game store, pick up a copy of Worms Armageddon on the DC, and head back home as quickly as possible. Make sure to pick up three friends along the way, and prepare to waste the night away. Worms in multiplayer form is one of the most addictive gaming experiences out there, and has claimed the nights and sanity of countless gameplayers.

Worms World Party is the next generation of Worms, and it's arriving soon for both the Dreamcast and PC. That puts it just in time for the Dreamcast online gaming boom, and Team 17 is going the extra mile to make sure that Dreamcast owners get the full online Worms experience, something that was missing from Worms Armageddon.

So how have these little critters managed to captivate so many gamers? Well, the worms themselves are horribly cute in their violence, with high pitched squeals and adorable little animations, but that's probably taken a back seat, in most gamers' minds, to the series' brilliant handling of worm warfare. You take control of a team of worms, with your goal being to eliminate all other teams on the two dimensional playfield through turn-based combat. When it's your turn, you can select from an arsenal of available weapons with which to assault your opponents, blasting them with machine guns and explosive cows, swatting them away with a bat, and so forth. You can also position your worm, teleport somewhere on the play field, jump to another platform, and so on and so forth.

As for online play, Worms World Party will feature full SegaNet support for three other players, but there's a catch. Dreamcast players cannot play against PC players online and vice versa. And that's too bad, because I was hoping to kick some of the IGN PC editors' butts in this game, but oh well. Turn-based games don't need high-speed connections to play online, so Worms World Party will most likely not be compatible with the Broadband Adapter. But with the long-awaited online play feature as well as dozens of brand new missions, Worms World Party is one online bash you shouldn't miss and we'll definitely have the final word when the game ships late May.

This Month In N64

Hey, what am I doing here? Remember the old days of N64.com? I used to run what's now IGN64 with Matt long before Fran Mirabella 443 was even born. If you've been reading the site back then, you may remember that Mr. C tends to disappear from time to time -- only to re-appear a week later, half drunk and sick to boot. Well, folks, it happened again. He's gone to Mexico. No good bye, no article for Unplugged and no approximate return date. So instead of forcing Fran to write an introduction for two Nintendo sections (she's busy enough running the sites), I figured I'd come back out of retirement to quickly tell you: the N64 is still dead.

Sad, but true. Nintendo may still make money off the few N64 titles it releases to the market, but consumers are stuck with a console that died way before its time. So what's left for N64 fans? Hope that GameCube makes its date -- and a whole bunch of collectible game carts and import games.

PEER SCHNEIDER

Feature Story: Looking for some round-the-world action? Check out the definitive guide to foreign N64 games. pg. 32.

EDITOR'S TOP 5	EDITOR'S MOST WANTED
1. Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time	1. Legend of Zelda (NGC)
2. Super Metroid (SNES)	2. Wave Race (NGC)
3. Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past (SNES)	3. Luigi's Mansion (NGC)
4. Super Mario World (SNES)	4. Gran Turismo 3 A-Spec (PS2)
5. Fire Emblem IV (SF)	5. Metroid Advance (GBA)

Super Bowling   pg.37

Aidyn Chronicles   pg.37

IN THIS ISSUE

The Complete N64 Import Guide
All the Nintendo 64 import games you need to own
– and the ones you should avoid at all cost.

All Japanese gaming consoles share one thing in common: a huge library of Japan-only titles that never made it to the US market. The N64 is a marked exception. Unlike the Saturn, Dreamcast, PlayStation or Super NES, the Japanese Nintendo 64 received not only far fewer games, but also far fewer good games. Case in point: Wipeout 64, Rocket, Battle for Naboo, Conker's Bad Fur Day, Ridge Racer 64, Spider-Man, Tony Hawk, Pokémon Puzzle League, World Driver Championship, The World is Not Enough, StarCraft 64, Vigilante 8, Rayman 2, and even ExciteBike 64 never came out in Japan. It's no surprise then that N64 import gaming is mostly limited to die-hard gamers trying to get certain Nintendo-made titles ahead of time. That's not to say there aren't any good Japan-only N64 games worth importing. You just have to know what to look for. That's where we come in. On the following pages, we break down all the games worth getting – and which ones to avoid.

Top Imports

1. Sin & Punishment: Successors to the Earth
If you're a fan of old-school shooters, you owe it to yourself to import this gem. Developed by Treasure, the same guys behind Gunstar Heroes and Radiant Silvergun, (and before that Contra and Castlevania for the SNES), Sin & Punishment is a mix between Panzer Dragoon, Galaga and Contra. The game is a bit on the short side, but if it went on any longer, you'd probably blow a fuse. The action in this on-rails shooting extravaganza is beyond intense. While the graphics are a tad blurry and the voice acting is awful, the effects and designs are top notch. Best of all, everything is in English. Since Nintendo has still not announced a US version (the game came out last year in Japan), it's time to pay your local import store a visit.

2. Dezaemon 3D
Why, oh why did Nintendo not release this game in the US? Well, we know why. Nobody would have bought it. Athena's Dezaemon 3D is basically a "build-your-own-shooter" creativity app. Using an extensive graphical menu system, players can create their own levels, cut-scenes, polygon models, backgrounds, textures, enemy AI, and even compose their own music. Whether you want to make a Star Fox clone, an overhead shooter or a sidescroller, if you can think it up, you can build it. While the menus are all in English, the tutorial and manual are in Japanese which means you will have to invest quite some time to figure it all out. But if you've always dreamt of making your own game, this is your best chance.

3. Animal Forest
The last first-party title to be released for the Japanese N64 is also one of the quirkiest. Billed as a communication game, players are free to roam about a small forest community, talk to animals, run chores and slowly learn what peace and harmony are all about. While there is tons of Japanese text to wade through, the gameplay is very rewarding. The graphics are typical Nintendo fare – cute, but imaginative enough to appeal to older gamers as well. But perhaps the most attractive part of the game to foreign players are the many emulated NES classics you can play as you progress through the game.

4. Custom Robo and Custom Robot V2
Think Virtua On meets Pokémon. Although the gameplay is very "US-friendly", Nintendo was too chicken to bring either Custom Robo game stateside, probably because of the SNES-style 2D map graphics. The story mode has you challenge rival Robo owners to duels against your own custom mech. Every win yields a new weapon or enhancement for your robot, which you can then also use in the game's excellent two-player versus mode. V2 has a four-player tag-team mode and a longer story mode, but gameplay-wise and graphically both titles are the same. There is plenty of Japanese text in the story mode, but it's easy to figure out what to do even if you don't know Japanese.

N64 FEATURE

The Complete N64 Import Guide (cont'd.)
All the Nintendo 64 import games you need to own
– and the ones you should avoid at all cost.

5. F-Zero X + F-Zero X Expansion Kit
This is one of two reasons to own a 64DD. Design your own tracks, cars and Championship from scratch, then race your buddies or the 29 computer opponents on your new creations. The industrial-strength track editor is the high point of the package, but the new stereo tunes and bonus courses aren't anything to scoff at either. If you're an F-Zero fan, this add-on disk is a must-have. Sadly, 64DDs are already scarce in Japan, so you may have to search high and low to get your hands on one. Remember that you need the Japanese version of F-Zero X to run the Expansion Kit. The US edition won't work with the 64DD.
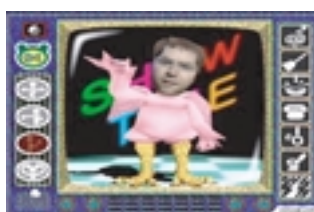
6. Mario Artist: Talent Studio
Talent Studio was essentially NCL's killer app for the 64DD. This hilarious "game" includes a capture cartridge device that lets you import a face snapshot and use it to build a virtual character. Using hundreds of clothes and accessories, you then dress up your little Frankenstein and watch him or her (or it) perform on screen. You can even use your characters to create simple movies, complete with sound, music and special effects. Sounds complicated – but the graphical interface is so easy to use that anyone can figure it out after a few minutes.

7. Tetris 64
If it wasn't for the lackluster presentation and sound, Tetris 64 (aka Bio Tetris) would be the clear winner of the N64 puzzle wars. But even if it can't compete with the slick presentation and score of The New Tetris, Tetris 64 eclipses them all with a better four-player mode and much more gameplay variety. To round off the whole package, this oddball title is compatible with a Bio Sensor that uses your heart rate to either slow down or speed up the gameplay (depending on whether you want to relax or get excited).
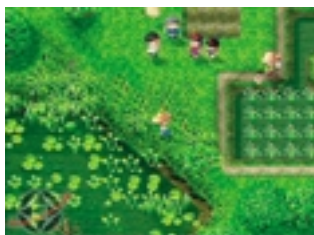
8. Nushi Tsuri 64
Who would have thought that a fishing game could be this fun – and this deep! Once slated for US release as Legend of the River King 64, this Japan-only RPG/fishing game from the makers of Harvest Moon combines lifelike 3D graphics of fish and insects with horribly outdated 2D map graphics. There's plenty of Japanese text, as you're required to put together your own equipment and talk to countless NPCs. Unlike other fishing games which are all about catching the biggest fish in the lake, this game is essentially about "catching 'em all". A sequel is also available, but although it features improved graphics, it isn't quite as charming as it lacks many of the original's RPG elements.

9. Susume!! Taisen Puzzle Dama
The anime-inspired 2D graphics of this Puyo Puyo-like puzzle game may not appeal to a mainstream audience, but few players can put this one down after giving it a try. Like with all puzzle games, speed is important – but pre-planning combos and chains is what separates a novice from a master. The Parodius-style characters are seriously funny, if a bit on the "are you sure this isn't too much, Anoop?" frightening side...

10. Bakuretsu Muteki Bangaioh
Did you know that Mischief Makers and Sin & Punishment weren't Treasure's only N64 games? Released only in very limited numbers, Bakuretsu Muteki Bangaioh falls somewhere in between an action shooter and a puzzle game. Players steer a tiny flying mech through extensive mazes littered with enemies and turrets. The game's 2D graphics make it look more like a left-over from the 16-bit days – but the action once again hits the mark. A true collector's item, due to the low release numbers. A Dreamcast version also exists.

N64 FEATURE

The Complete N64 Import Guide (cont'd.)
All the Nintendo 64 import games you need to own – and the ones you should avoid at all cost.

Honorable Mentions

Although they didn't make our Top 10, here are a couple of other quality titles that are worth a look.

Dance Dance Revolution: Disney's Dancing Museum

A great game for kids, but only if you also buy the dancing mat controller. Grown-ups beware, the midi renditions of the Disney tunes will quickly drive you crazy.

Japan Pro Golf Tour 64 (64DD)
This is the best golf game on N64. Too bad it's on the 64DD, where very few gamers got to play it.

J-League Eleven Beat 1997
Simple but fun super-deformed soccer action. Worth a look if you like action-oriented multiplayer sports games.

Mario Artist: Paint Studio (64DD)
The 64-bit version of Mario Paint may have lost some of its appeal due to the availability of PC art programs, but it's still a very well designed creativity app.

Mysterious Dungeon 64
This latest installment in Chun Soft's RPG franchise is a quality game, but you need to be proficient in Japanese to enjoy it.

Nushi Tsuri 64
The sequel to Legend of the River King drops the RPG elements, but still features enjoyable ocean fishing and great polygonal fish models.

Powerful Pro Baseball
Konami's long-running series never made it out here because of the big-head character designs. That's a real shame, because the Powerful Pro games are truly excellent. The latest in the series is Jikkyo Powerful Pro Baseball Basic 2001.

Puyo Puyoon Party
Both Puyo Puyo Sun 64 and this four-player sequel are great puzzle games that are worth owning. If only they had slapped the Kirby or Mario license on this one – and left Doctor Mario alone...

Rakuga Kids
You either love it, or hate it. Konami's 2D fighter takes its inspirations from both Street Fighter and PaRappa the Rapper. Good two-player action, but the design isn't for everyone.

Shigesato Itoi's #1 Bass Fishing
Not to be outdone by US developers, Nintendo's second party HAL created this strange, yet very realistic bass 3D fishing simulation starring 2D animals.

Virtual Pro-Wrestling 1 & 2
The Japanese versions of THQ's wrestling games may have not have the same wrestlers, but they usually had more options and better modes. However, each new US release improved over the Japanese version – so only get VPW if you're into Japanese wrestling.

Japan vs. USA

Did you know that there are some differences in certain games that were released in both territories? Apart from the fact that almost all Japanese box art eclipses the US designs, here are some of the most important ones:

Harukanaru Augusta Masters '98
Nintendo changed the featured course to Waialae and released it here as Waiaelae Golf. Still only one course, though.

Super Smash Bros.
The (older) Japanese version is superior to the US one. NOA messed with some of the sound effects to make the battles appear less violent.

Goemon's Great Adventure
The US version doesn't feature many of the delightful digitized songs that appear in the Japanese release.

Pokémon Stadium
The original Japanese Pokémon Stadium only featured a third of the Pokémon available in the GB games. Pokémon Stadium 2, which was released in the US as Pokémon Stadium, fixed this limitation.

Pokémon Stadium 2
The US version features changed championships and a Snap mode absent from the Japanese release.

Top Gear Rally
The Japanese release was improved over the US version. Many bugs were fixed and Kemco added an EEPROM to save your game on cart.

Super Mario 64
The US version was improved with more voice samples and bug fixes, but NCL later re-released the US Super Mario 64 with Rumble Pak support in Japan as Shindou ("Rumble") Super Mario 64.

Wave Race 64
Like Mario 64, this game was also re-released in Japan with Rumble Pak support (Shindou Wave Race 64).

Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time
Blood in a Nintendo game? Yep, Japanese players got to see Ganon bleed red. No big deal, though. US gamers got golden cartridges.

N64 FEATURE

The Complete N64 Import Guide (cont'd.)
All the Nintendo 64 import games you need to own
– and the ones you should avoid at all cost.

Middle of the Road

The following games aren't bad, especially if you can pick them up for a few bucks. Don't spend too much money, though.

Air Boarder 64
Agetec was so close to releasing this game in the US, Nintendo Power actually reviewed it. Good thing it never came out as this hoverboarding game is merely average.

Choro-Q 64 2
The sequel to Choro Q, which was released in the US as Penny Racers, is more of the same. Not a great game, but a fun diversion for fans of miniature car racing.

Densha De Go!
There's even a train controller to go along with this JR train and subway simulation. Sadly, gameplay is very limited, and not just because trains are stuck on rails.

Doraemon 2 & 3
Epoch's two sequels to the original Doraemon Mario 64 clone add more adventure elements, and consequently have more appeal than their bland predecessor.

Famista 64
Namco tested the waters with this SD baseball game and quickly bowed out of N64 publishing when the title didn't sell. Fun game, but Konami's Powerful Pro Series is better.

GI Stable
Konami's SD horse racing sim isn't bad, but it's doubtful that it will find many fans outside of Japan. Unlike you like raising and betting on tiny, fat horses.

Goemon Mononoke Sugoroku
Yes, it's only a board game. But it stars Goemon characters and is actually a lot of fun if you put some time into it.

Hoh no Challenger: Denryu Ira Ira Bou
Stands for Burning Challenger: Irritating Electric Stick. The graphics are beyond boring, but the parlor game inspired action is actually quite fun.

J-League Dynamite Soccer
Another super-deformed soccer title, this time from Imagineer. Not as good as Eleven Beat, but not a bad game overall.

Kokuukan Naita: Pro Baseball King
Not to be confused with Konami's Powerful Pro series, this Imagineer SD baseball game is decent, but not great.

Kyojin no Doshin
Param's 64DD title shows glimpses of ingenious game design, but the controls and cameras bring the game down a few notches.

Power League 64
The N64's very first realistic baseball sim. Not as good as All-Star Baseball or Ken Griffey, but a valid first attempt from Hudson.

SimCity 64
This 64DD version of the classic city building sim has some awesome new features, but the sluggish graphics earn this one a "for fans only" warning.

Let's Smash Tennis
Also released in Europe, this cutesy tennis game lost most its appeal once Mario Tennis came out. An average game with some outlandish courts and a character creator.

Super Robot Spirits
Somewhat sluggish fighting game using flying mechs. Some good ideas, but the execution could have been much better.

Super Robot Taisen
Turn-based combat simulation featuring the (in Japan) ultra-popular mech characters. The graphics may be ugly, but the gameplay is surprisingly good.

Tactics Soccer
This soccer RPG/sim is packed with details and micromanagement, but why can't someone build one of these games around a great soccer engine (like Konami's ISS/Jikkyo, for example)?

Wonder Project J2
One of only two games Enix created for the N64, this sequel to the SNES character RPG can be amusing if you know Japanese, but it's far too short.

(continued on next page)

Name Confusion
Don't buy a dud just because the title sounds cool. Some Japanese game titles sound completely different from the US ones. Here are some examples:

Super Speed Race 64=Automobili Lamborghini

Space Dynamites=Dark Rift

Choro Q 64=Penny Racers

Human Grand Prix: New Generation=F1 Pole Position

Hyryu no Ken: Twin=Flying Dragon

Wild Choppers=Chopper Attack

Yuke Yuke Troublemakers=Mischief Makers

N64 FEATURE

The Complete N64 Import Guide (cont'd.)
All the Nintendo 64 import games you need to own
– and the ones you should avoid at all cost.

Don't Touch!

The following titles aren't worth your while.
Collectors only, please.

64 De Hakken! Tamagotchi
Just as forgettable as the bleeping pet fad that swept Kindergartens a few ears ago. Nice presentation, but limited board game gameplay.

64 Hanafuda
Is there really a reason why you would want to play a Japanese Hanafuda card game on your N64? Come on!

64 Oozumo 1&2
A good Sumo simulation would be a welcome addition to the N64 lineup. Sadly, these two super-deformed sumo management sims are sloppy and unappealing.

64 Trump Card Collection
Yawn. Play 13 different card games on your Nintendo 64. Alternatively, you could also buy a real card deck for a buck and save yourself some money.

Doraemon
Uninspired Super Mario 64 clone starring the popular blue cartoon cat robot. The two sequels are marginally better.

Eiko no St. Andrews
Holds the dubious honor of being the worst golf game on Nintendo 64. The famous St. Andrews Old Course has never looked uglier.

Getter Love!
A dating sim with more Japanese text than the Kojiki. I've tried to find something good in this game, but had to give up... Getter out of here!

Heiwa Pachinko World 64
Woohoo, a Pachinko sim. Sorry, but playing for virtual prizes just isn't the same. If I can't have that coffee machine, I don't want to subject myself to million silver ball Hell.

Kyojin no Doshin – Kaihou Sensen Chibikko Chikko Daishuugou
Aaaah! What is this abomination? If you happen to buy a 64DD and this add-on disk is included, lock it away immediately so that nobody gets hurt!

Last Legion UX
A mech battle game for up to two players that was once scheduled for US release. The bland graphics ruin any feel of excitement.

Neon Genesis Evangelion
Don't even get this game if you are a fan of the anime. This "interactive cartoon" makes Dragon's Lair look like Mario 64.

Onegai Monsters
Everyone wants to cash in on Pokémon. The name relation didn't work for "Onemon", a sub-par RPG from the makers of 64 Oozumo.

Pachinko 365 Days
Better than Heiwa Pachinko World... but again, Pachinko isn't exactly such a captivating game that it deserves its own title. Gets boring after one, not 365 days.

Shin Nihon Pro Wrestling: Toukon Road 1 & 2
The New Japan wrestling league license is the best thing about these Hudson games. The gameplay is so-so and the graphics are nasty.

SimCity 2000
Everything is wrong in this lackluster port of the PC classic. The flicker graphics will give you a seizure within minutes.

Super B-Daman: Battle Phoenix 64
Another gun game without a gun controller. There are better mini-games in Donkey Kong 64 and Jet Force Gemini.

Ultraman Battle Collection
Woooah, what is this smell? Don't import this game! It's great for a few laughs, but please don't shell out money to play this turd of a strategy game.

Yakouchuu II
Athena's graphic/sound novel plays out a murder mystery on a cruise ship. Don't buy this unless you are 100% fluent in Japanese and think shelling out $60 for a novel with midi music is a good idea.

Zool
Often mistakenly called Zoor (Zool combines the words Zoo and school), this lackluster RPG effort from the makers of Quest 64 will bore you to tears. Don't import this one.

NINTENDO64 REVIEW

Super Bowling
Extreme bowling? Is there such a thing? Athena answers the question with a resounding "sort of."

The third bowling game for N64 has arrived – and like the other two, Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling and Milo's Astro Lanes, it makes for a good rental. Super Bowling mixes reality and fantasy by having bowlers play in unique environments ranging from icy ponds and misty forests to woody Japanese corridors and neon-laced Chinese temples. But don't expect these outlandish alleys to radically alter the gameplay experience. The bulk of the single-player game revolves around competitions. It's almost like a fighting game in some ways. You can choose from two characters to begin with and must "fight", or competently bowl, your way through a number of opponents. Each opponent has his, her, or "its" (yes, not everyone is human) own level. By defeating your competitor you open the ability to challenge new master bowlers in their respective courts. There are also two multiplayer modes. One is the bowling equivalent of golf, the other is a straight versus mode.

All of this lends itself to a pretty amusing bowling experience – if you like bowling. You're not going to just pick it up and get sucked into it by its deep storyline and addictive modes. Its gameplay style is mainly geared toward those who get a kick out of bowling, and are looking to play on some weird, yet somewhat questionably possible turf. It's a fresh take on the bowling sport without being outrageously weird or compulsively perfect to simulation. Give it a rental if you're into the sport and you don't have a problem staring at blurry-ass graphics.

GAME INFO

Publisher	UFO
Developer	Athena
Genre	Sports
Players	4

RATINGS:
Presentation: 7.0   Graphics: 6.0   Sound: 5.0   Gameplay: 7.0   Lasting Appeal: 4.0

OVERALL SCORE: 6.7

NINTENDO64 REVIEW

Aidyn Chronicles: The First Mage
THQ's RPG finally arrives with a lot of depth hampered by lousy, lousy graphics.

Chances are that if you're a serious roleplaying enthusiast, the Nintendo 64 hasn't been your console of choice. Blame the inherent restrictions of the cartridge-based format if you like, but having such an important genre all but ignored has driven many gamers to other platforms. Now, as the N64 nears its last days, publisher THQ and developer H2O (of Tetrisphere fame) have finally released their long-in-the-making Aidyn Chronicles: The First Mage.

Sadly, the wait wasn't worth it. Yes, this is an old-school fantasy RPG. Yes, you get to spend hours upon hours gaining experience points and leveling-up in hopes of creating an unbeatable party of characters. Yes, there is a massive, epic journey ahead for those who have the patience for the slowly developing story. But far too much of the game simply clunks along, obscuring the positive aspects of the visuals in a haze of fog, blocky character models, and stuttering framerates. The battle system is the key to any good RPG, and Aidyn Chronicles' awkward combat system barely serves its purpose. If you are a diehard RPG fan who just can't live without Aidyn Chronicles, you'll probably learn to forgive its many flaws for the rewarding depth it offers. But we suggest you rather spend your time on another game that's easier on the eyes and less trying on your patience.

GAME INFO

Publisher	THQ
Developer	H2O
Genre	RPG
Players	1

OVERALL SCORE: 4.2

RATINGS:
Presentation: 5.0   Graphics: 3.0   Sound: 4.0   Gameplay: 4.0 Lasting Appeal: 4.0

This Month In GameCube

Can you believe it? It has been nearly two years since Nintendo's "Project Dolphin" was unveiled. Back then it seemed as though it was merely a glimmer on the horizon. But then in August of last year, Nintendo unveiled the hardware and pushed our jaws to the floor with some gorgeous demos. The demos were the worst part of it, though. We thought Nintendo was committed to proving that GameCube was capable of producing better games, not just pretty visuals in tech demos. Sadly, that's all it was and the hardware was the focus of the unveiling, not the final plan or, more importantly, the software.

So, here we are sitting anxiously on the brink of E3 2001 where Nintendo promises to finally unveil some real software. Bearing that in mind, I hope and pray that this issue of Unplugged will be the last issue we have to preview GameCube software that barely exists. It's just painful.

FRAN MIRABELLA III

Feature Story: What's Nintendo showing at the E3 this May? Lots and lots of really cool stuff. pg. 39.

EDITOR'S TOP 5

1. Super Metroid (SNES)
2. Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time (N64)
3. Super Mario World (SNES)
4. Final Fantasy II (SNES)
5. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 (DC)

EDITOR'S MOST WANTED

1. Metroid 4 (NGC)
2. Super Mario/Luigi (NGC)
3. Legend of Zelda (NGC)
4. Metroid (GBA)
5. Wave Race (NGC)

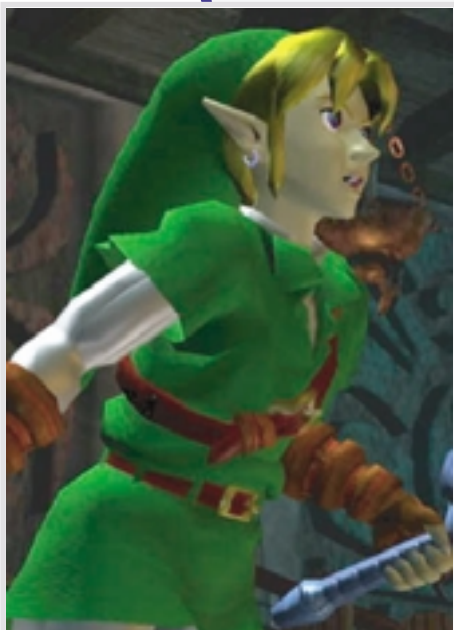**Dinosaur Planet**   pg.40

Wave Race 2   pg.40

IN THIS ISSUE

Nintendo's Big E3

What should we expect from GameCube at E3 and why the show's so important to Nintendo.

The wait is finally over. Electronics Entertainment Expo 2001 is almost here. And with it, the official unveiling of Nintendo GameCube's software lineup. It is, of course, a life-changing event for any self-respecting GameCube-obsessed fanatic -- and if you're reading this, that means you. So as we approach the final days until the big show, what can you expect from the big day? We have pieced together the hearsay and speculation to give you our straight-up analysis on each below.

The Big Rumor: There will be 16 playable GameCube titles at the show, but many will be available only to members of the press behind closed doors. This figure allegedly accounts for all of the third-party contributions except for Sega's.

Our Analysis: Comes from reliable sources, but with Nintendo's schedule always changing it's hard to know what will and won't make it into the loop. Software from Retro Studios, for example, has most recently been given a May 11 pre-show evaluation date at which point Nintendo will allegedly decide whether any of it's good enough to highlight at E3.

The fact that many of the games may exist only behind closed doors will no doubt upset many attendees hoping to catch a glimpse of as much GameCube software as possible. But insider reports allege that Nintendo's reason for the shadowed showing is honorable -- the company evidently wants gamers to experience its titles in closed-off, soundproof booths for best results.

So what games will be on-hand? The "technical demo" known currently as Luigi's Mansion will, our sources say, be the spotlighted title of the Nintendo booth. The game stars Luigi, but will "feature" Mario as well.

Other products include Super Smash Bros. 2, the official sequel to the critically acclaimed Nintendo 64 fighter. Also, Wave Race GameCube from NST, which company leaks are predicting will be the major visual powerhouse from Nintendo as it pumps out some of the most beautiful water and wave effects ever realized. Other games are Eternal Darkness, an adult-oriented "psychological thriller" from Silicon Knights, and the futuristic action-RPG Too Human from the same company. Additionally, gamers can look forward to a sequel to Star Wars Rogue Squadron from LucasArts, which should prove absolutely amazing in every respect, and offerings from Left Field Productions in the form of NBA Courtside 3 and a secret snowboarding title. Rare, meanwhile, will allegedly produce a secret "weird" title, say insiders, as well as the revamped Dinosaur Planet. If we're lucky, we may even get a sneak-peek at Perfect Dark 2.
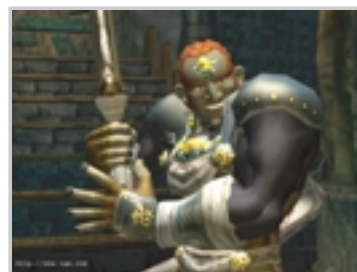
Third-party pickings will be slim, but keep an eye out for a few selections from EA -- Madden 2002 and SSX: Special Edition. And Capcom, despite rumors to the contrary, may even be on hand to finally show off its Resident Evil GameCube title.

Of course, we won't claim to know it all. The biggest factor is also the one we know the least about. What surprises will Nintendo EAD have for us? Unfortunately, due to totally tight lips at NCL, we just don't know. But hey, E3 is upon us, and much like the night before Christmas, you don't want all of your surprises spoiled before the celebratory morning.

GAMECUBE PREVIEW

Dinosaur Planet
Can Rare's RPG make the transition from N64 to GameCube?

An epic adventure is on its way from one of Nintendo's most-prized second-parties, Rare. Just as Rare took what they learned from Super Mario 64 and created the Banjo-Kazooie franchise, the company seems to have been influenced by Nintendo's 3D epic, Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time, and is now underway with a product that builds upon that. This new epic is called, Dinosaur Planet, and it was originally scheduled for release on the N64 but time and circumstance convinced Nintendo it would do well on GameCube.

Dinosaur Planet is one of the first GameCube titles we can admit to having played. To say that it isn't a lot like Zelda in terms of game mechanics would be a flat out lie. As the story goes, you take hold of the two main characters, Sabre and Krystal, and guide them on a quest to suppress an ancient evil. Likely story, but don't let that lead you to think Dinosaur Planet is cliché. From the portions of the game we played at E3 2000 it looks to feature a giant-size world with tons of puzzles. One puzzle demonstration involved sneaking past a guard and stealing his prison key. To do this you had to find and use a magical mask that transformed you into a "bad guy". In its transition to GameCube, Rare can only improve and embellish upon it, as it was complete for the N64 at the end of 2000. On the N64 it featured tons of voice acting, loads of facial animations, and lots of varied textures. Its appearance on GameCube will surely be stunning.

GAME INFO

Publisher	Nintendo
Developer	Rare
Genre	EPG
Players	1
Release	TBA 2001

GAMECUBE PREVIEW

Wave Race 2
Handed over to a new development team, this sequel has a lot to live up to.

What do you get when you take the original water physics from Wave Race (N64), hand them off to one of Nintendo's very talented first-parties, Nintendo Software Technology (NST), and put it all together on GameCube? The latest buzz feeding into the IGN offices suggest that the combination makes for a incomparably gorgeous GameCube sequel to the 1996 N64 version, which still has some of the best water effects to date.

Some might be prone to worry about EAD's (Nintendo of Japan's main development group) decision to farm the beloved franchise out to foreign hands, but such an attitude is an underestimation of NST's talent. The development house was responsible for the Ridge Racer 64 port, which featured a great soundtrack, solid framerates, and a superb control scheme. NST performed the same feats by delivering the very polished, Pokémon Puzzle League. On both accounts, the DigiPen-infused development team has proven it knows how to take established game mechanics and make them sparkle and shine as best they can.

In the case of GameCube's Wave Race sequel, we can undoubtedly expect the same lustrous qualities. GameCube uses a 1.5 gigabyte optical disk, which leaves plenty of room for a high-quality, energized soundtrack – something the original lacked. Also, since the title is being developed by an American house, it will likely shed that very annoying commentator often heard yelling fancies about "maximum power" or your progress. All in all there's little reason to doubt this coming sequel to Wave Race. It was an awesome game in the first place, and with the sequel being based off of the same mechanics it can't go wrong.

GAME INFO

Publisher	Nintendo
Developer	NST
Genre	Racing
Players	4
Release	TBA 2001

ign pocket

This Month In Pocket

Don't let the price of Game Boy Advance games frighten you - you may be used to $30 for Game Boy Color titles, but carts for the new system will be much higher.

Development and manufacturing costs have significantly increased since the original Game Boy - where a single programmer and an artist were par for a Game Boy team 10 years ago, a lot more is necessary in bringing a title to a system as powerful as the Game Boy Advance. You need a couple programmers and an army of artists to bring a quality GBA title to life. Plus, cart costs are still up there, especially when the smallest GBA cartridge is as large as the largest Game Boy Color game: 32 megabits, or 4 megabytes. Costs add up, and the average Game Boy Advance title will range from $35 to $40, with first-party Nintendo games being the low point at $29.

Sure, it sucks that the days of the $20 B&W Game Boy game are over...but at least the gaming experience is getting better. And after playing games like Tony Hawk Pro Skater 2, I'd be more than happy to fork over 40 bucks for a title of that quality.

CRAIG HARRIS

Feature Story: How do you link up your Game Boy Advance? Craig shows you all. pg. 42.

EDITOR'S TOP 5	EDITOR'S MOST WANTED
1. Advance GTA (GBA)	1. Tony Hawk Pro Skater 2 (GBA)
2. Black & White (PC)	2. Mario Kart Advance (GBA)
3. Castlevania (GBA)	3. Black & White Creature Editor (PC)
4. Conker's Bad Fur Day (N64)	4. Crazy Taxi 2 (Dreamcast)
5. Chu-Chu- Rocket (GBA)	5. Shantae (GBC)

F-Zero   pg.43
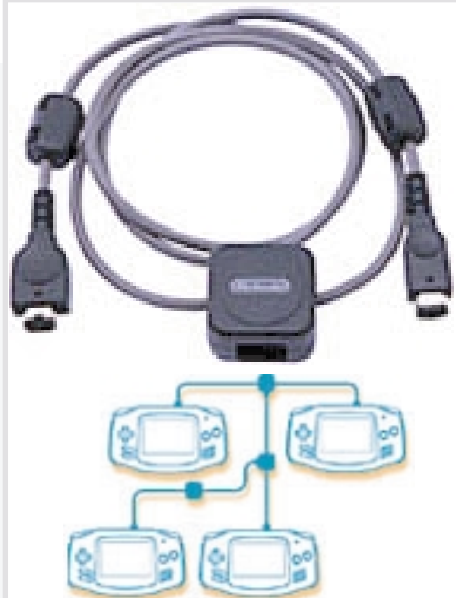

Advance GTA   pg.44

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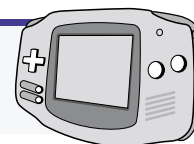
Linking the Game Boy Advance

Here's what you need to know to play against friends and foes.

Though the system has changed and evolved in its 12 year life span, there's been one constant in the Game Boy's design since the very beginning: a Link port. This doohickey is more versatile than it looks, because it can turn a bland game into a incredible grudge match...if used correctly, of course.

See, this port enables at least two Game Boy units to connect together and talk to each other, whether it's simply data exchange like Pokémon or all-out multiplayer gaming like Mario Tennis. And what's more, it doesn't restrict gaming to one screen - in a well-designed link game, each player has his own screen and perspective on the action.

Several games for the original Game Boy utilized the link right from the launch of the system, including the original Tennis and Golf. Nintendo even expanded on the idea with F-1 Race by packing in a four-player link pod. But as time went on and the Game Boy evolved into the Game Boy Color, fewer publishers were willing to invest time to get their games working with the link port. Very few Game Boy Color games utilized the multiplayer link port, chalking it up to "too difficult to do" or "not enough time to do it."

With the Game Boy Advance, Nintendo seems to be taking the link a lot more seriously - sure, the company's biggest Game Boy property, Pokémon, utilizes it as an integral part of the design, but Nintendo definitely knows the potential the link cable can offer...and has updated this feature for the next generation handheld.

Four-Player Link

When the Game Boy Advance hits the shelves, you'll be able to buy a specialty GBA Link Cable. This is an upgrade beyond what was available for the previous Game Boy systems, as the new cable has a link box in the center of the connection. One cable is good enough for a one-on-one link, but for three and four player games, the other players must plug their own cable into the box. The cables are set up where one player is the Master, the other players are the slave - and this is indicated by the purple (master) and gray (slave) connections.

Four Players, One Cartridge

Once connected, it's game time. A handful of link play games have been designed for the "downloadable link" option - a mode where only one person (the Master) needs a cartridge, and the multiplayer game is downloaded into the other one, two, or three systems connected. Super Mario Advance, F-Zero: Maximum Velocity, ChuChu Rocket, and Bomberman Tournament will be the first games to support this feature - but there are limits. The GBA system has limited RAM inside, so this feature will be dependent on the size of the game. F-Zero, for example, only has one track in this link mode, and all players must use the same generic vehicle (with different colors, of course). Since many games will be too large to fit in system memory, only a handful of games will feature this link mode.

Four Players, Four Cartridges

This will be the more utilized option - when players have their own copy of the game inside their system, they can take full advantage of the multiplayer features. Since the entire program resides on their system, the game developers don't need to limit the link play like they do for the downloadable link option. F-Zero will really shine if every player has their own cartridge - all the tracks and vehicles are playable, and the game even sends best lap times back and forth through all the system connected, recording the data on every player's cartridge.

Keep in mind that it's also at the publisher's and developer's discretion to include multiplayer support. It does take time to design and program the mode into a game - and some launch games just ran out of time to include the support. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2, High Heat 2002 and Ready 2 Rumble 2, just to name a few, will not have link support because of time restraints. Here's the list of games that will support the link cable on the system's launch day: June 11, 2001 (* – contains downloadable link option):

Chu Chu Rocket - 4 player*	Fire Pro Wrestling - 4 player	F-Zero - 4 player*
GT Advance - 2 player	Krazy Racers - 4 player	Super Dodge Ball - 2 player
Super Mario Advance - 4 player*	Top Gear GT - 4 player	Tweety and the Magical Jewel - 4 player

(* – contains downloadable link option)

F-Zero: Maximum Velocity

Great control and gorgeous, super-fast graphics makes this the perfect GBA launch game.

GAME INFO	
Publisher	Nintendo
Developer	NDCube
Genre	Racing
Players	4
Release	06/11/01

One of the first titles for the Super NES was also one of the system's most technically impressive games as well - when F-Zero was released on the Nintendo 16-bit system a decade ago, it offered the fastest, smoothest pseudo-3D racer ever conceived for a home system...and it was only the beginning. History's repeating itself almost exactly 10 years later, as Nintendo has launched the Game Boy Advance with the follow-up to the SNES classic design - not only is the game amazing to play and look at, it shows just what's possible on the new handheld. And it's only the beginning...

F-Zero was followed up on the N64 as a fully-realized 3D polygonal game, but the Game Boy Advance sequel goes back to the game's roots with a super-speedy, gorgeous "Mode 7" style game engine...the sprite-style 3D graphics that the Super NES was known for. But don't think this is merely a rehash of the original game - it's not. The game mechanics have been given an overhaul to make the experience as fresh as possible. A new control technique requires you to blip the accelerator rapidly to take the sharp turns, as well as utilize the L and R shoulder buttons to lean into the curves - and that's the game's only real control issue, as rapidly tapping the A button and holding the R shoulder together is like patting your head and rubbing your tummy at the same time. It takes a lot of practice to get the knack down pat.

The game is also extremely challenging, with 20+ tracks and four classes of difficulty - the computer AI gets extremely pushy later on, and you'll find yourself trailing behind if you don't avoid collisions. What's worse, there are elements on the tracks themselves that will really push your ability to take control of your hyperspeed vehicle - mines that will explode on contact, whirlwinds that will spin your vehicle, and jumps that'll launch you in the air...fly off the course and it's "game over" for that car. As you progress through the classes, you'll earn cars with enhanced top speed, acceleration, and shield strength attributes.

The element that really makes F-Zero Maximum Velocity shine is its four player option - the SNES original was a single-player environment, but thanks to the GBA's four-player link function, three other friends can connect their systems and get their own viewpoint of the race. Nintendo even offered a single cartridge "download" link feature just in case your friends are missing their own copy of the game, but you'll only get one track and no choice of which vehicle to race. Still, even though this feature is limited, it's just another element that makes F-Zero such a treat on the Game Boy Advance.

The system's just out of the gate, and F-Zero: Maximum Velocity is an amazing achievement for the Game Boy Advance - you just have to imagine what else this little thing can do when the developers continue to learn the ins-and-outs of the nifty little unit.
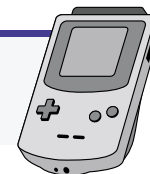
RATINGS

Presentation: 8.0   Graphics: 9.0   Sound: 8.0   Gameplay: 9.0   Lasting Appeal: 8.0

OVERALL SCORE: 9.0

POCKET REVIEW

GT Advance
3D? Who needs it when sprites look this good?

THQ definitely scored the right Japanese launch title for release in the US. When the Game Boy Advance was released back in March, there were only a handful of non-Nintendo-published games released with the system - one of which was a racing title released by MTO called Advance GTA. The game is mutation between the arcade design of Namco's Ridge Racer series, with the car licensing and realism focus of Sony's Gran Turismo series...combined with the graphic techniques of Nintendo's own F-Zero: Maximum Velocity. It's an excellent racer for the handheld, and THQ knew it - they're the ones responsible for the stateside release: GT Advance Championship Racing.

GAME INFO

Publisher	THQ
Developer	MTO
Genre	Racing
Players	4
Release	06/11/01

And the company's pretty much leaving the game completely alone, keeping the game exactly as it was released in Japan. Though we haven't received the final, official lineup of vehicles, we understand that THQ wanted to get the game out by the US launch...which means leaving the licensed Japanese vehicles in the game - re-rendering all those sprites for US cars would be incredibly time consuming. But that's perfectly okay, since among the 40 vehicles, you'll recognize popular wheels such as the Miata, Celica, and Civic; and some not-so-familiar, but really cute cars like the Cube and Midget.

Though the game utilizes real vehicles in its line-up, it's not amazingly realistic - but for a handheld racing title, developer MTO really pushes the Game Boy Advance in its first year of life. The title has 32 unique tracks split up into four classes - and each race involves coming in first, second, or third within three full laps and a field of eight cars. If you come in first, you're awarded a brand new vehicle. You'll also earn an upgrade to all your vehicles after specific races - this is probably the game's weakest element, as you physically have to turn on the enhancements, and there's no reason why you wouldn't want to. And though the game uses a graphic technique like F-Zero for its 3D effects, it's a little cruder here - in several instances its difficult to see what the designers intend as solid objects and pavement, since everything is painted on the flat course texture. You'll find yourself knocking into imaginary barriers when you're trying to cut corners - it's all about learning what's road and what's not.

The game's real charm spawns through its powersliding technique, an action that made games like Ridge Racer such a rush to play. And in GT Advance, it's necessary to grasp the concept, as there's no possible way to place if you're constantly knocking into the walls or bashing into another vehicle. It's an amazing feeling zooming around 180 degree turns without bumping a barrier.

The game also features two-player link - it's a slight disappointment to learn the developers didn't work four players into the mix, but the single player challenges and hidden secrets more than make up for it. GT Advance is a great foundation for a series of racers, and I'm hoping the namesake continues in the handheld's lifespan - the original title is an amazing first attempt.

RATINGS
Presentation: 8.0   Graphics: 8.0   Sound: 5.0   Gameplay: 9.0   Lasting Appeal: 8.0

OVERALL SCORE: **9.0**

This Month In PC

You've probably been wondering why I've left IGN Xbox, and now I'm back on PC. You're probably wondering what's going to happen to your favorite editor over at -- I'm Vinny. Remember me? That guy... writing on the PC site? About games? Not the bald one. Or the fat one. Or the mean one. Well anyway, I know this is going to come as a shock to all of you, but I'm leaving. Leaving. Forever. It's almost like getting fired, only I'm given two hours to pack up my stuff, instead of 15 minutes. I've been sneakily writing from LA for a couple of months now, and I've been pursuing my model/ actor/ waiter/coffee clerk career to its fullest extent. I've already got a job as a stand in for Tina Yothers on a Lifetime movie about the horrors of pregnant ecstasy abuse, so as you can see I'll be just fine. I'll miss y'all horribly -- except you, Jim from Tulsa. You know what you did, and you know how you'll pay.

VINCENT LOPEZ

Feature Story: Regulating the Regulators. Who's going to makes sure the ESRB doesn't go too far? pg. 46.

EDITORS' TOP 5	EDITOR'S MOST WANTED
1. Undying	1. Halo
2. Black & White	2. Republic
3. Conker's Bad Fur Day (N64)	3. Half-Life: Blue Shift
4. Tribes 2	4. Startopia
5. Intellivision Snafu	5. Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare

Anachronox   pg.47

Tribes 2   pg.49

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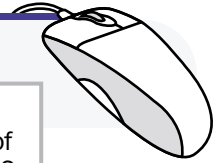
Regulating the Regulators
Is the ESRB effective enough to quell the fears of the general public when it comes to videogames?

With the recent 5-billion dollar class action lawsuit aimed at media companies, including id Software, developers of such high-profile shooters as the Doom and Quake series, the issue of videogames and youth violence is once again thrust into the spotlight, and videogames and their makers are once again being vilified.

TALMADGE BLEVINS

Title	Editor-in-Chief
Looks	crazy/beautiful
Turn-ons	napkins, puppies
Favorite candy	Asse
Best side	Left

Long before the recent school shootings prompted media outcries about videogame violence, the electronic entertainment industry spawned an independent organization dedicated to self-regulation. The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) was established in 1994 to review and rate game content. Offering a warning system to parents, the ESRB included easy-to-understand symbols on software and cartridge boxes that would alert parents to such content as crude language, sexual themes, the use of tobacco and alcohol, and realistic depictions of violence. The ESRB was borne out of a concern from the interactive entertainment industry about the perception of their products, and works much in the same manner as the ratings system the motion picture industry has been using for years.

However, while the ESRB has received high ratings for its accuracy, three of the links in the chain of regulation still compromise the effectiveness of the ESRB. Although many retailers agree not to carry games not rated by the board, the age restrictions are rarely enforced at the retail end and, with few exceptions, young children can still walk into the software section of any major retailer and buy a copy of the latest ultra-violent shooter without so much as a request for identification or even an odd glance from the person behind the counter. Blood and gore sells. It's a sad truth, but one that advertisers and publishers figured out a long time ago, and one that retailers, the ones raking in the cash from such sales, don't seem to give much thought to as long as they're making their cut. Parental education and enforcement needs to be boosted as well in order for the ratings to have any effects at all. Moreover, some publishers who claim to support the ESRB system have been found guilty of subverting its efficacy by marketing mature rated games to an underage audience.

Are we saying that violent videogames promote violence in society? Certainly not! Like most social issues, it's impossible to point a finger at any one phenomenon and say, "That's the cause of all our problems!" As much as we might like to find one single cause, such oversimplification is hardly useful. We here are IGN certainly don't believe the pastime that we love so much is the seed of evil, but we do believe that the industry can ease the finger pointing by enforcing the regulations set down by the ESRB. Policies without implementation are ineffective. The first step has been made, but the follow-up leaves much to be desired if the industry is to avoid government regulation.
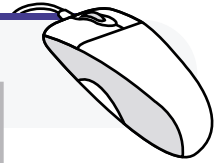
Anachronox

Ion Storm's bleeding-edge RPG tries to make the best of PC and console worlds.

The latest 3D, third-person role-playing game from Eidos takes a departure from the typical fantasy setting and instead inserts the player in a massive science fiction world. Part ChronoCross and part StarBlazers, Anachronox is built using a heavily modified version of the Quake II engine. Anachronox promises to offer massive levels of exploration and interaction of the environment, melee with various galactic foes, and discovery of unique weapons and items that aid you on your quest.

GAME INFO	
Publisher	Eidos
Developer	Ion Storm
Genre	RPG
Players	8
Release	June 2001

About three hundred years ago devices were found all over the galaxy. The devices, dubbed Mysterium Technology (MysTech), are relics from a long-departed civilization. Planet sized spheres called Senders enable people to travel through hyperspace all throughout the galaxy. The largest of these spheres, Sender One, contains within its hollowed out center a city belonging to the dead race. The city, Anachronox, has become the home of various scoundrels and mercenaries including you, Sly Boots.

Sly is hired as a bodyguard to an old man named Grumpos. Soon Sly is joined by his lackey robot, an old flame turned mercenary (suitably named Stiletto Anyway), his holographic secretary, and a renegade scientist on a journey across six planets, trying to save the galaxy from a mysterious menace. The possibility to use different characters to approach problems in different ways is pretty exciting. With seven total characters (three of whom will be playable at any one time), there's a lot of room for you to approach problems in your own way.

Anachronox uses a Final Fantasy-style turn-based mode of combat with an impressive system of weapons and martial arts moves. More intriguing is the ability to make your own weapons with the modular Elementor weapon system. Players will be able to design their own arsenal and test it out against the abundant enemies within the game. But combat is only half the story – Anachronox promises that your interactions with the game world will be just as important as the encounters with the various enemies. And as a diversion, the game will include lots of cool mini-games. We've seen a bit of the game in action and it is truly impressive. With 32-bit graphics, an amazing particle system, the graphics are incredibly rich.

Some impressive multiplayer modes are also being included. A co-operative campaign supports up to three players allowing you to cruise around the galaxy solving the mystery behind MysTech with your friends. You've got friends, right? Okay, if you don't have friends you can always log on to try out the game's deathmatch mode against your enemies. You've got enemies, right? I mean, if you don't have friends or enemies, then who are all these other people you meet day to day?

The team is still doing a lot of work on the spline-based camera scripting and content creation, but things are coming along nicely. The game should ship later this year with a full complement of development tools.

EverQuest: Shadows of Luclin
The third installment of the classic online RPG takes you to the moon.

EverQuest junkies need to get those space suits ready 'cause you're all going to the moon in the third expansion for EverQuest entitled Shadows of Luclin! Norrath's life bearing moon, Luclin will house 25 new zones split into two realms, the land of light ruled by Discord, and the land of shadow ruled by Order.

For the first time, EQ users will be able to travel to Norrath's moon called Luclin via classes which have the ability to teleport with spells as well as several monuments scattered around Norrath. Inside those new 25 zones, y'all will find plenty of new quests, items, and monsters all rendered with a reworked graphics engine allowing for new character models with a higher polygon count and more detailed textures. All of this will be updated in zones on Norrath as well as long as you have the Luclin expansion.

The other huge additions to the MMORPG will be a new starting city and another playable race called the Kerrans. They aren't new to the universe, but for the first time, you too can live out your fantasies as a giant humanoid cat person. Luclin's will have zones suited to all levels and while the level cap won't be raised from 60, Verant has stated that there will be plenty to keep the veteran players interested including some new ways to advance your character. Hope you weren't planning on doing any work later this year when it comes out.

GAME INFO

Publisher	Sony Online Ent.
Developer	Verant Interactive
Genre	RPG
Players	Variable
Release	Fall 2001

PC FUN BOX

PICKLE'S PUZZLES #1
Fun with anagrams!

Hiddy-ho folks! PickleBoy here with a chance for all of you IGN Unplugged fans to win some really cool PC stuff! This month we're starting a new feature: Pickle's Puzzles. I, the brine-encrusted PickleBoy, will challenge your mental acuity with a new brain-bender every month. Be the first to get it right and we'll send you a few PC games and some random schwag from our "Coffer of Crazy Crap."

This month's wacky conundrum is an anagram puzzle. Below you'll find the name of ten PC games, only problem is, stupid Dan Adams ran into me as we were going to print and all the letters fell on the floor. Since he's none too bright, he put them back the only way he knows...the wrong way. All you have to do is rearrange the letters in the words below to spell the name of a famous PC game. Some are hard, some are easy...but all are well-known PC games that any gamer should recognize.

1) Mood
2) Due Sex
3) Hall Fife
4) Art Elder
5) Mold Whore
6) Russia Some
7) Nasty Dice
8) Queer Vest
9) Icy Mist
10) With Dank Cable

Submit your answers by email to pc_feedback@ign.com with the subject "Pickle's Puzzles #1," and if you're the first to get it right, we'll send you some games and anything else we can find in the trashcan.
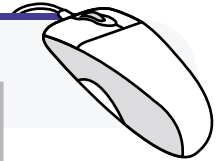
Tribes 2

Some attempts succeed and some fail. It's still more fun than any one person should have.

While Tribes 2 does offer a lot of improvements over the original, it doesn't break too much ground either in the area of design or gameplay. But not counting the first Tribes, there's no better online action game around than Tribes 2. Whether you're using your jet pack to fly the enemy flag back to your base, battling enemies in the close confines of a massive base or raining down mortar fire from a high flying hovercraft, Tribes 2 maintains a level of excitement throughout. Tribes 2's arsenal of amazing weapons, fantastic environments and human versus human competition makes for an unforgettable experience.

GAME INFO	
Publisher	Sierra
Developer	Dynamix
Genre	Action
Players	64
Release	Available Now

Capture the Flag games are still much more common than any of the newer game types. I think it was a good move on Dynamix's part to emphasize individual achievement in the newer game types, but it seems like most players prefer the team-based format. But this game is perfect for any action gamer who wants to play tactically but still likes lots of explosions. Two teams of a dozen cooperative players can create some of the most amazing fun you'll ever have playing in a game. Unfortunately, the game isn't quite ready to live up to the challenge of supporting 64 players.

The new inventory system allows you to set up to 20 different packages beforehand which you can call up with a single key stroke. The new weapons and items are pretty sweet but that's only because very little has been changed. The vehicles, for the most part are pretty average. I like the idea of ground vehicles, but the extreme slopes of the terrain make them really impractical. The main problem here, and especially with the flying vehicles, seems to be that the maneuverability is way down from what it used to be.

And there are plenty of kick-ass levels in the new game. The variety is a little better as well. New swamp and lava terrains add to the existing temperate, ice and desert sets. Excellent use is made of fog and rain and the spectacular meteor and lightning strikes really heighten the tension. The new bases and other installations are pretty sweet as well. The front end of the game comes with all sorts of enticing browser and clan management tools that, at the moment, unfortunately don't work at all. The browser is supposed to be the pivot around which the whole community is centered. Once the chat and news sections are up and running, they should enhance the community.

All that said, Tribes 2 is still amazingly fun. We're playing the hell out of it around work and home. If you see Albrecht-IGN, Boognish-IGN, or Fatty McGee-IGN on the servers (or anyone with the IGN at the end of their name for that matter), go easy on 'em – they're probably just there to take some screenshots. Yeah, right!

– Steve Butts

RATINGS

Presentation: 8.0   Graphics: 8.0   Sound: 8.5   Gameplay: 9.0   Lasting Appeal: 9.5

OVERALL SCORE: **8.9**

This Month In PSX

While little of the PlayStation's massive slowdown has surprised me, now that I have seen secrets that game companies have for late 2001, I can tell you now that the end isn't near.

For instance, Square's mid-April announcement to bring improved versions Final Fantasy IV and Chrono Trigger to the US. Sure, you can always download an emulator and play these games on a PC, but with new gameplay changes and CG that answers long-sought after questions, FF Chronicles is going to be a must-have two-game set.

Other games still remain fixed on our monitor. Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare and Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX are still plugging along, and the relatively popular Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX will see a sequel, "Maximum Remix" in late 2001. One of Sony's most popular franchises, Twisted Metal: Kids (temporary name), could be "lite" fun, too. After E3 we'll know much more.

DAVID SMITH

Feature Story: Can Enix's update to this venerable RPG compete? Find out, pg. 51.

EDITOR'S TOP 5

1. Mega Man X5
2. Dance Dance Revolution
3. Strikers 1945
4. Colin McRae 2.0
5. Fear Effect: Retro Helix

EDITOR'S MOST WANTED

1. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3
2. Time Crisis: Project Titan
3. Metal Slug X
4. Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare
5. Point Blank 3

Final Fantasy Chronicles   pg.52

Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear   pg.53

IN THIS ISSUE

Dragon Warrior VII

In this day and age, how can Enix's veneraable RPG compete? Find out inside.

How many years has it been since there was a new game called Dragon Warrior? The last would have been in the dying days of the NES, so...1992. That was nine years ago when Enix's signature RPG series last caught the eye of American gamers. The big question is can today's gamers' handle the brutal pace and length of an Enix RPG?

We'll find out soon enough because Enix is bringing Dragon Warrior VII (aka Dragon Quest VII in Japan) to the US this fall. Dragon Warrior employed a different developer than many of its antecedents. Richness and depth of story and gameplay have historically been the series' strengths. That may sound a little strange to those who remember endlessly bashing slimes on their NES back in the day, but Dragon Warrior VII is built around a fascinating plot concept and all kinds of interlocking game systems.

The core of character development is the job system -- it's appeared in previous Dragon Warriors, but modern gamers might be more familiar with the roughly analogous system in Final Fantasy Tactics (or FFV, for that matter). The hero, named whatever you choose to call him, begins the quest as a humble fisherman on Estard Island, but as the quest progresses (and he discovers the Daama Shrine) he can move through a variety of occupations: warrior, monk, magician, priest, dancer, thief, bard, seaman, shepherd, jester, and more.

Your party can include more than just humans, meanwhile, via a monster-breeding system that takes advantage of the series' massive bestiary. There are hundreds of monsters, from smiling slimes to massive dragons, and it's possible to tame certain ones and raise them in your own monster park. If your simulation itch needs scratching with something on a larger scale, there's also a subsystem where you can build your own city, populating it with NPCs you meet throughout the game. Mini-games, medal collection, two hidden bonus dungeons and a variety of subquests all come together to create an experience that's much more than just plowing through a straightforward story.

That wouldn't be a problem in any event, though -- the story that shapes all of this is far from straightforward. In the beginning, the world is small, as are the ambitions of the hero. He's a simple fisherman, living in a small village on the solitary Estard Isle, which stands alone amid an expansive ocean. His quest begins with one strange revelation: once, the world was made up of more than one island. In the company of his friends Maribel and Prince Kiefer, you're sucked back and forth in time to continents that were destroyed, on a mission to solve their mysteries and save them from the destruction that would have visited them. As the quest moves forward, the modern world grows closer and closer to its intended shape, but what destroyed so much of it to begin with? There's far more than meets the eye.

So, the question is, will an American audience accept this, especially this late in the PlayStation's lifetime? By the time Dragon Warrior VII hits the states (this fall), the Japanese version of Final Fantasy X may already be in our hands.

-- David Smith

PLAYSTATION PREVIEW

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3
The third phenomenal skater is coming
to...PlayStation? We're surprised, too.

screen from TH2

GAME INFO

Publisher	Activision
Developer	TBA
Genre	Action
Players	2
Release	TBA

The sequel to the best-selling non-Pokemon game of 2000 is being splattered across half a dozen platforms, and we're more than pleased to see it come to the aging PlayStation.

The aim of Tony Hawk 3 seems to be to make the environment a more active part of the skating experience – the subject of new tricks hasn't come up yet, although the control scheme should evidently be the same, and the manuals and new lip tricks added in Hawk 2 will be back. Tony Hawk 3 will have more continuously alive and interactive levels – at least on next-gen machines. "Pedestrians, cars, traffic accidents, natural disasters and changing weather conditions" are among the features that will animate and affect your progress throughout each level, although PS one owners may have to settle for less in this department.

Currently, Activision has laid out several of the game's details, while keeping several key elements under wraps. What we know comes in the form of parks and riders. The skater parks include Skater Island, Rio de Janeiro, Los Angeles, Canada, Tokyo, Paris, and a few more.

The list of professional skaters appearing in the game doesn't seem to have changed significantly. The only new name is Bam Margera, while the rest of the list as announced so far includes veterans of the two PlayStation games. The current list includes: Bam Margera, Steve Caballero, Rune Glifberg, Eric Koston, Bucky Lasek, Rodney Mullen, Chad Muska, Andrew Reynolds, Geoff Rowley, Elissa Steamer, and Jamie Thomas.

PLAYSTATION PREVIEW

Final Fantasy Chronicles
Chrono Trigger and Final Fantasy IV in one
package? Yes!

Even though we've entered the golden years of the PlayStation, the feelings that Square conjured by announcing Final Fantasy Chronicles were fresh and strong. The two games that Square are bundling into its summer release – Final Fantasy IV and Chrono Trigger – are titles that gamers have been clamoring for since the dawn of the system.

Originally released on Nintendo's Super NES in the early '90s (Final Fantasy IV in 1991 and Chrono Trigger in 1995), the combination of these two games, with the addition of extra game features and CG, make Final Fantasy Chronicles a shiny little package that most collectors would love.

GAME INFO

Publisher	Square EA
Developer	Square
Genre	RPG
Players	1
Release	July 2001

Final Fantasy Chronicles includes new cinematic sequences for Chrono Trigger as well as re-creations of key sequences, adding to the game's emotional impact, answering lingering questions, and offering insight into the game's successor, Chrono Cross.

Final Fantasy IV features a new dash feature for players to quickly move through dungeons and towns, plus a new two-player mode that enables two players to participate in battles. And in a move that should please fans of the original who weren't too thrilled with the mediocre writing found in the Super NES version, Square has opted to use a completely new and improved localization of the original unedited storyline. Final Fantasy IV also will feature new cinematic sequences and some original monsters, abilities, items and scenes that were not seen in the Super NES version.

PLAYSTATION REVIEW

Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear
Some ports just weren't meant to be, and this is one of them.

Rogue Spear looks like a first-person shooter, but it's not; anyone who says otherwise is likely a Counter-Strike refugee who fled that particular battlefield on account of lousy reflexes into the comforting arms of auto-aim. This is a strategy game – a strategy game with action elements, certainly, but a strategy game nonetheless.

Here's where Rogue Spear runs into trouble. The PC version uses a navigation system built around waypoints. Before the mission, you plan routes through the area and what you're going to do from moment to moment by placing waypoints throughout the map – you connect up those dots to define where your teams move, and attach actions to particular waypoints to define what they're going to do there.

On PlayStation, you can only navigate room by room, not point by point, and the AI follows a set path through every given room. It becomes immediately obvious that this isn't quite adequate, because your teammates die with unusual frequency, seemingly due to poor navigation and insufficient adaptability.

The framerate is up in comparison to the original PS Rainbow Six, but it's still pretty slow, and the game in general still doesn't look too good. The texture quality, for one, is very low, with the same flat colors of the PC version and additional blurring and pixelly bits. Rogue Spear still sounds about as good as it did on the PC, which is pretty good. All in all, this game should have stayed on the PC.

GAME INFO

Publisher	Red Storm Ent.
Developer	Saffire
Genre	Action
Players	1
Release	Available Now

RATINGS:
Presentation: 5.0 Graphics: 4.0 Sound: 8.0 Gameplay: 4.0 Lasting Appeal: 4.0

OVERALL SCORE: 4.5

PLAYSTATION REVIEW

Metal Slug X
Slug! Slug! Slug! Agetec tried to slip it under the radar, but we can't ignore one of SNK's best.

"What's wrong with this game? How come the characters are so smooth - where's the aliasing? Where are the polygons? How do I control the camera? What, I don't control the camera? I don't need to? Weird."

A certain degree of confusion from the modern gamer is expected when exposed to Metal Slug X. It's an evolutionary end product of a genre already extinct, side-scrolling shooters having fallen by the wayside years ago when the game Illuminati declared The Future Will Belong to Polygons.

Well, Agetec seems unwilling to let the genre slip away quite yet. It behooves all fans of classic gaming to pick up a copy ASAP. It's short, it's simple, and it's not quite the equal of the Neo Geo original, but it's still as sweet a shooter as dollars can buy nowadays. Even if you don't want to make it part of your collection, it's one of the best rental values around.

That's because despite its brilliance, Metal Slug X is a little bit on the short side. The five or six levels can be blazed through in an evening. Every second is packed with action, though, and if you actually want to build your skills, you could be playing through the game dozens of times.

If you'd like to appreciate a finely-made feat of 2D art over and over again, though, picking out new and different details each time through, this is the game for you, and you'd better lay your hands on it before it's gone.

GAME INFO

Publisher	Agetec
Developer	SNK
Genre	Action
Players	2
Release	Available Now

OVERALL SCORE: 9.0

RATINGS:
Presentation: 8.0 Graphics: 9.4 Sound: 7.5 Gameplay: 9.0 Lasting Appeal: 7.5

This Month In PS2

There still isn't any PS2 revolution, but one thing I can say for sure is that there are plenty of good games to find, and there certainly isn't any PlayStation 2 "shortage" anymore. For those who couldn't buy a PS2 during the record-setting day of October 26, 2000, Sony's consoles are now easy to find across the country. Go get one, and be happy.

With that in mind, think of this -- Gran Turismo 3 comes out in just a little while, while Twisted Metal: Black, Red Faction, Dark Cloud and a slew of other games are due this summer. So the systems are in, the games are in, where are you?

Then there's E3. At this year's event, Sony is expected to announce its online plans, and to spill an incredible amount of games onto the showfloor. We are literally going to see hundreds of PS2 games. Insomniac and Naughty Dog are top on our priority lists. We'll deliver all the news live from the show. Don't miss it!

DOUG PERRY

Feature Story: James Bond, Agent Under Fire. pg. 55.

EDITOR'S TOP 5

1. Metal Gear Solid 2 Demo
2. Klonoa 2
3. Red Faction
4. NBA Street
5. Rumble Racing

EDITOR'S MOST WANTED

1. Soul Calibur 2
2. Metal Gear Solid 2
3. Final Fantasy X
4. Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance
5. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3

Splashdown   pg.56

Super Bombad Racing   pg.57

James Bond 007 in...Agent Under Fire

Say good bye to The World is Not Enough and hello to Agent Under Fire.

Electronic Arts finally broke its silence on The World Is Not Enough, and the new is both good and bad. EA canned the PS2 version of TWINE, but has created an entirely new and original Bond game in its place.

Agent Under Fire is not based on any movie license and has nothing to do with TWINE, a project that was killed months ago. Instead its blends first-person shooting with a handful of racing levels, as well as a four-person, split-screen multiplayer game. About one third of the game is made up of racing, chasing and driving combat.

As Bond, your most urgent task at hand is locating and dispatching a new criminal mastermind by the name of Malprave who wants to take over the world with an army of clones. At his side, Bond has M and Q, a new lovely associate by the name of Zoe Nightshade, and a quiver of killer guns and gadgets, such as a handgun (with the ability to choose an attached silencer), a machine gun, a rocket launcher, and a top-notch sniper rifle. Bond also uses the Q-Claw, a Tenchu-like grappling hook, and perhaps even a rocket pack. There is of course many more, but EA wouldn't reveal them all just yet.

The environments in the pre-alpha game look sharp, polygon heavy -- and nicely textured. The game moves at a nice fast clip, right around 60 frames per second. There is an amazingly constant level of activity onscreen, including flurries of machine-gun fire, quick movement from both the enemies and your own character, and tons of interactive backgrounds. The game also boasts a streamlined interface. M and Miss Nightshade talk to you straight into an imaginary headset, so you hear, not read, her messages during battle or while you're hiding, sneaking, chasing hot European babes, whatever. The gun reload animations were also on par with other first-person shooters, too.

Cars such as the BMW Z8 and 750 make an appearance, and we're told that the Aston Martin is definitely in the game. Interestingly enough, former members from the Need for Speed team at the EA Vancouver studio are working on the driving aspect of the game, while the Redwood Shores team is working on the first-person shooter aspects. Driving is supposed to comprise about one-third of the game.

The multiplayer game follows the tried and true deathmatch formula, originally introduced on PCs, and modified into a four-player split-screen on the consoles. With several aspects of Agent Under Fire following Goldeneye's lead, the matches look to include the cast of characters from the game proper, and should throw in surprise characters from Bond's extensive library of movies. EA is confident that there will be lots of controller configurations for the Dual Shocks, but has said that no online play, no i-link, and no mouse-and-keyboards will be supported.

We'll have more information and impressions when we see and play the game at E3!

PLAYSTATION 2 PREVIEW

Ico
Sony's surprise Zen-adventure is beautiful and surprisingly peaceful.

GAME INFO

Publisher	Sony Computer Ent.
Developer	Sony Computer Ent.
Genre	Adventure
Players	1
Release	August 2001

Ico is, without a doubt, a weird game. A wonderful, beautiful, stunning game, but a baffling one, nonetheless. The story tells it all. In a land that time forgot, a small country village encounters a generational freak of nature. A young innocent boy is born with horns, and the villagers see him an evil that must be cast out.

When he escapes from the coffin in which he was left to die, Ico meets a strange, ethereal young girl who he intuitively knows must be saved from the castle, too. Thus starts the story of Ico and Yorda, two castaways who must flee from a huge castle wherein an evil queen is holding them hostage.

Ico is a truly beautiful game that plays on the PS2's ability to handle fogging, light and darkness, but it's also tremendously jaw-dropping because of its enormous play environments. The castle itself is seemingly endless in height, scale, and design, and the world around it just appears to go on and on.

What Ico really breaks down to is a moderately paced adventure game, with many, many physical puzzles and a pinch of action and fighting. But the vibe from the game is more chill-out Zen-like in nature than any game since, and don't get me wrong here, Myst. (Just for the record, it plays nothing like Myst, it just shares a few tonal qualities with it.)

We'll have more on Ico in the near future.

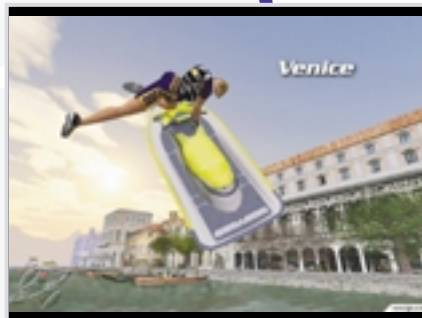# PLAYSTATION 2 PREVIEW

Splashdown
Rainbow Studios continues to dominate things extreme with a very promising waterborne racer.

Rainbow Studios may soon hold the world record as far as extreme-sports games are concerned. They tackled motocross on the PC and now they have no less than two more PS2 games lined up, Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2, and now Splashdown.

Rainbow has crafted an entirely new physics model to describe the behavior of their craft, as well as the movement of water and the objects that sit buoyant within it. Splashdown uses a terrain engine derived from the one in ATV. Particularly impressive is the fact that the terrain doesn't end at the waterline -- you can see through the water all the way down to the bottom.

Does it play just like ATV on the water? Well, I would be lying if I didn't feel a hint of Rainbow's last game in the controls of its latest, but the fluid surface naturally makes a considerable difference. You can feel it give and resist when you land from a jump or turn sharply, it reacts appropriately when you adjust your pitch and yaw, and the wave motion allows Rainbow to build on the rhythm concepts that made ATV such a complex racer.

GAME INFO

Publisher	Infogrames
Developer	Rainbow Studios
Genre	Racing
Players	2
Release	Fall 2001

Even on smooth water, it's surprising how much you can do with the water just by manipulating the attitude of your craft. Push forward and you nose under, which lets you pop out like a cork if you manipulate the throttle and pitch controls just right.

Rainbow looks prepped to deliver another hit with Splashdown. We can't wait.

PLAYSTATION 2 REVIEW

Super Bombad Racing

This ridiculously cute kart game is irresistible, fun, and has seriously defeated our cynicism. Darn.

We have an ambivalent attitude towards kart racing. This genre has hardly evolved a whit since it first sprang into being with the original Super Mario Kart. Kart games in the modern age are not much more fun than back on Super NES. But, they're still fun. Herein lies our quandary: our critical impulses say "This game is derivative!" but our little happy lizard brains say "Whee! Kart racing! Fun!"

Star Wars Super Bombad Racing is just that, Wheee fun! It looks cute, but more than that, some effort and technical sophistication have been put into making this game look cute. The little SD character models are remarkably detailed, and each one has a bunch of little animations to give them personality.

The level designers working have taken plenty of cues from Electronic Arts' SSX, giving their tracks a great sense of scale, especially in the later levels. The arena mode provides plenty of opportunities for violent catharsis, enabling all eight racers to shoot it out in stages with the same scope as the racetracks.

Like so many aspects of Super Bombad's presentation, I wonder why I don't hate the music. I suppose there's something about the ridiculous atmosphere that leaves one receptive to any element of it – if I'm going to laugh at Jar-Jar throwing his tongue everywhere, I may as well laugh at the marimba and pan-pipes version of the Sith Lord intro music...

GAME INFO

Publisher	Lucas Learning
Developer	Lucas Learning
Genre	Racing
Players	4
Release	April 25

RATINGS:

Presentation: 7.5   Graphics: 8.0   Sound: 7.0   Gameplay: 8.0   Lasting Appeal: 7.0

OVERALL SCORE: 7.8

PLAYSTATION 2 REVIEW

Rumble Racing

What happens when you play an arcade game and it's fun? You play for hours and hours...

While last year's NASCAR Rumble on PlayStation was an enjoyable racing game, it had a few nagging problems that held it back. Fortunately, it appears that the game's developers kept that in mind when it came time to make Rumble Racing, as just about all of the problems of the original have been completely addressed.

The NASCAR license has been removed, showing most in the game's imaginative vehicle designs, and gameplay enhancements have been made to boot, including a rewarding trick system that kicks ass.

One of the biggest problems of the original was the balance of the power-ups versus actually racing well and staying at the front of the pack. While the power-ups are still going to be better for those that are in the back, the tornado power-up can easily have a last place racer move up to first place at any moment, helping to return more balance to the game.

The AI has been tuned, and improvements have also been made to the game in the area of track design, too. The only real complaint that I have about the game is that the AI can be a bit too harsh at times. Also, the only thing missing is support for four-player split screen racing, which could've proven to be a lot of fun even if level detail had to be scaled back to keep up the framerate.

Still, Rumble Racing is clearly one of the best, if not the very best, racing game currently available on PlayStation 2.

GAME INFO

Publisher	Electronic Arts
Developer	Electronic Arts
Genre	Racing
Players	2
Release	April 24

OVERALL SCORE: 8.8

RATINGS:

Presentation: 8.0   Graphics: 8.5   Sound: 7.5   Gameplay: 9.0   Lasting Appeal: 9.2

This Month In Xbox

The storm is nearly upon us, gang. With only a few weeks remaining, you're sure to see countless game announcements make their way out of the woodwork for the Xbox, and what this means to you, the gamer, is that you'll finally get a better look at the big picture for Microsoft's new console. Word has it Square, Lucas, and Namco are all coming to the party, and with EA, UbiSoft, and Infogrames confirming no less than 30 games between them, things are certainly looking up.

We're totally stoked for E3, and as part of our pre-show jitters, we've put together a feature on our most anticipated show happenings, and just because we love you, we've thrown in a massive interview with Microsoft's Carl Schnurr covering all things Amped. And just because we care, we've also thrown in some hands-on impressions with Crystal Dynamic's Mad Dash, which we touched on last issue. Enjoy.

BRANDON JUSTICE

Feature Story: E3 is going to be the Xbox's make it or break it time, but we're not worried. Check out what's in store, pg. 59.

EDITOR'S TOP 5	EDITOR'S MOST WANTED
1. Super Mario Advance (GBA)	1. Oddworld
2. Crazy Taxi 2 (DC)	2. NFL 2K2
3. Half-Life (DC)	3. Twisted Metal: Black (PS2)
4. Mad Dash	4. Red Faction (PC)
5. MDK 2 (PS2)	5. Enlcave

Mad Dash　　pg.54　　　　**Amped Interview**　　pg.54

We're mere days away from the 2001 Electronic Entertainment Expo, and while we hate thinking about slaving away for roughly five days to make sure we bring all the latest and greatest on the Xbox's big debut, we're equally excited about all the cool things we'll get to experience. The following is a quick look at what we think the big highlights will be, and some of the stuff we'll focus on during our E3 coverage blowout.

1.) MS Press Conference — IGN Xbox's pre-show coverage will kick off with a bang with a live report from the Microsoft Press Conference, and a lot is riding on this little meeting or press and company representatives, as what is revealed here could make or break the console in one swift blow. Information on pricing, MS's online plans, new major 3rd party partnerships, and most importantly, the system's launch date, will be outlined, and because of the crucial nature of these elements, the pre-E3 Press conference easily nabs our top spot. Will it be under the magic number of $299.99? will it hit this year? And will we be gaming online...we'll know on May 16. *commence nail-biting*

2.) Witnessing the Power of Odd! — We've been long-time fans of the Oddworld series, and we cried tears of pain when we heard all the hoopla surround the PlayStation version we'd prolly never have time to play, only to let loose with tears of joy when Uncle Bill came in and bought us Xbox fans a new toy. E3 will be Oddworld's big day out, and as our most anticipated title, it will be the first kiosk we rush to when the floor opens its loving arms on the 17th. We're expecting a much more robust presentation than the one we witnessed at E3, with new levels and incorporated story elements, as well as a mouthful from the inhabitants on how the process is going. We're still keeping our fingers crossed on a picture with Abe, though. We hear he is too busy for the common folks now that he is such a high-roller...

3.) Screaming About Sega — Yeah, I am a little biased as a former Dreamcast editor, but what can I say? I love me some Sega games, and while I was going to focus on just one game we can't wait to see, the truth is, I am unbelievably stoked about all of Sega's products at the show. Seeing the new Jet Grind in motion, not to mention Gunvalkyrie, will undoubtedly be highlights. Throw in seeing the next generation sequel to my favorite sports series ever made in NFL2K2, as well as breaking the news of a yet to be announced title I am sure you're all going to flip out about will be an awesome series of events.

4.) All Hail Halo — We keep hearing more and more smack-talk about how this game is one of Microsoft's most important first-party titles, yet we've seen so little on it to date. In recent weeks, we've been reading up on Bungie's big bad shooter, and we can't wait to see if all the things they talk about will actually live up to the hype. On top of this, the game's multi-player functionality will finally be detailed at E3, and we're excited to see how it will all unfold. The new Halo demo is expected to be the game's first real debut, and we hope it will be indicative of the greatness yet to come.

5.) Flyin' with the Birdman — One of the best things about E3 is that we'll get to take a long hard look at not one, but two new Tony Hawk titles that will be making their way to the Xbox, and as huge fans of the series, we can't wait to see what sort of luxuries the power of the Xbox will afford the creative talents behind these two games. With what we've heard on Tony Hawk 2X thus far, this should be one of the launch's biggest titles, and any collector's dream. Granted, we'll have to check out THPS3 on the PS2, but imagining it with less rough textures and more features won't be too hard.

6.) One Ring to Find Them and One Game to Excite Them — Because I am a late bloomer as a dork, I just got around to reading the Lord of the Rings Trilogy last Summer, so it is still fresh in my mind. Between

this and the fact that the movie is looking like one hell of a flick, I am totally pumped about getting a look at Sierra's recently announced Tolkien game, which is looking really likely for the 'Box. The rumored confirmation of this game's Xbox exclusivity could be just what the 3rd party doctor ordered. Between that and The Martix, the Xbox's 2002 line-up would be pretty sweet, no?

7.) SSXbox — What else do we need to say, really? One of the PlayStation's Crown Jewels is going to finally be unveiled at E3, and we'll finally get a chance to truly evaluate how the two consoles stack up in terms of performance, not to mention the fact that hey...SSX!!! This game is one hell of a snowboarding title, and as much as we're looking forward to all of EA's announcements, this game has a special place in our minds as one of the most important Xbox titles at E3.

8.) Buffy Beating Ass on the Box — What's this? A cheesy T.V. license made it on to the list of love? You heard right folks. Microsoft is going after some hardcore gaming licenses that also have strong roots in pop culture, and this is one we'll be watching with a great degree of interest. Why? Well, for starters, this game was already looking phenomenal at last year's E3 show, and with a year under its belt and some solid design, this could be a license game we won't have to make fun of.

9.) Sneaking Around with Snake — We've know we're getting "a" Metal Gear Solid on Xbox, and we're hoping upon hope that this year's E3 will be the show where Konami finally opens the tightly clinched fist of ambiguity and give a little back for the greater good. Xbox users need the 411, ya know? To that end, we'll be harassing Kojima in person with hopes of getting the goods, but at the very least, we'll at least be getting an eyeful of the next generation Metal Gear, even if it is just on the PS2.

10.) The Great Unknown — Last but certainly not least, we're looking forward to those things that companies absolutely refuse to tell us. Like kids on the night before Christmas, we know we'll be getting some good stuff we never saw coming, but as of yet, we haven't the foggiest idea what these things will be. Microsoft, UbiSoft, Sierra, Eidos, EA, Interplay and more are expected to have a few aces up their sleeves for the show, and we can't wait to see what they'll have in store. Luckily, we'll be there to let you know!

And there you have it. We'll be back from May 16-20th to let you know how our picks fared, as well as more news, previews, and interviews than you can shake a large, unwieldy controller at. So, be sure to check back to xbox.ign.com for the best E3 Xbox coverage on the web. We'll see you then!

Amped Interview

IGN Xbox talks with Program Manager Carl Schnurr about the definitive Xbox snowboarding game.

GAME INFO

Publisher	Microsoft
Developer	Microsoft
Genre	Sports
Players	1
Release	Fall 2001

While the season is winding down, the development behind Microsoft's first action sports title is finally heating up, and while Amped hopes to redefine the way you look at snowboarding, Program Manager Carl Schnurr hopes to define the way you look at the game itself. In a recent interview with IGN Xbox, he had a lot to say about why this title is going to be a blast to play. And yes, we made sure to grill him about the screenshots, just for you.

IGN Xbox: I guess we could start by asking you how you managed to arrive at doing a snowboarding title? Considering your background, this is kind of a weird fit...

Carl Schnurr: It's an extremely weird fit! I actually was not here when the game was conceived. The idea sprung from the mind of the art director down here in Salt Lake, Nathan Larson. I guess you could call him "Mr. Extreme Sports." He does wakeboarding and hunting and fishing and snowboarding. Actually, we have a big stick figure up in the office of him and all the injuries he's incurred this year. Let's see... He's knocked himself out twice. Broken his tailbone two times, sprained his ankle a couple of times. Most recently, he completely separated his collarbone from every other part of his body [laughs] and had major reconstructive surgery. So, you could say he's pretty hardcore.

He was the driving force behind getting this game done, because he looked around and basically said, you know, none of these games capture snowboarding the way that he and his friends snowboard.

IGN Xbox: You've got some guys that are hardcore snowboarders, and then some "newbies" like yourself. Do you think that's going to help translate into a game that will appeal to both the enthusiasts and the casual gamer?

Carl: I think so. I come from a fairly hardcore gaming background, having worked on Rainbow Six and Rogue Spear, I bring a blend of realism and fun that we put into those games. We kind of have a design committee that includes myself, Nathan, and an ex-pro who is our business guru on the team.

IGN Xbox: You mentioned earlier that Nathan was of the opinion that none of the games out there really did a good job of conveying the sport, but obviously, one of Sony's biggest trump cards during the PS2 launch was SSX.

Carl: Exactly. I guess what I'd say is at the time that the idea for this game got started, there was nothing out there.

IGN Xbox: Well, playing the game, we can see it's a pretty drastic departure from the typical games in the genre, even in terms of what SSX was trying to do. Could you expand a bit on some of the key design elements that you guys plan to bring in to the genre?

Carl: I guess, first off, I don't like dissing other games, at all. I'm a big fan of SSX. I love it. A lot of people on the team really like the game, and a lot of people on the team play and like other snowboarding games, as well. But basically, SSX is a racing game, and we're not about that.

(continued on the next page)

Amped Interview (cont'd.)
IGN Xbox talks with Program Manager Carl Schnurr about the definitive Xbox snowboarding game.

I guess the biggest difference that we're striving for, and where think there is a big gap...a big need, a big void waiting to be filled is the need for a snowboarding game that focuses on freestyle, number one. And I know that's in our "fact sheet" or whatever, but that really is our focus behind the game. It's about open riding and big mountains where the player has a lot of choice. It's kind of like this sandbox design philosophy where we say: "Here's this cool area for you to do really amazing stuff in, and you happen to be on a snowboard, right? Go to it and have a blast. Be creative with it." We have these challenges for you to accomplish, to sort of drive you to push yourself to do better and cooler things. So that's the main difference. The other big difference is that we're not a simulation, and we're not arcade. We're kind of going down the middle, even though we have real resorts and real riders, real boards...all that good stuff, [A straight simulation] isn't necessarily any fun. So, we're taking a middle ground where we don't have big things floating up in the sky that you're trying to hit.

Instead, we have media people that you're trying to do tricks in front of, so we capture everything in realistic terms, but we try to make it fun as well. One of the reasons I think this game will be successful is that everyone loves showing off. That's actually really core to gaming culture. I mean, you watch people playing Tony Hawk, they're sitting there (and I rarely see two people playing head to head...they're sitting there, you do a two minute run, someone else does a two minute run), and they're kinda saying "Top that, buddy!" We're trying to get the same kind of vibe going in this game. Not just in multiplayer, but in single player as well, where you're trying to beat other pros on the mountain. You're trying to show off to the media people, or you're trying to impress sponsors, stuff like that.

IGN Xbox: Speaking of which, can we talk a little bit about the multiplayer elements of the game? I'm pretty much betting you guys are at least going to do split screen, and I know that some of the more direct online stuff is not really a possibility because of MS's strategy, but are you guys planning on doing anything with LAN technology for Amped?

Carl: We are doing multiplayer, but it's turn based. Again, we looked at the play style of what our game is about, which is showing off and it's trick based, and we looked at what design would support that for multi-player, and we basically decided that turn taking would support that better. We wanted to re-create the feeling of you being on the mountain with a pack of your friends, sort of taking turns, showing off to each other. For example, one of the modes we have in multi-player is basically like playing horse down the mountain. You have four people, a leader is randomly chosen, they head off down the mountain, painting a trail wherever they go. Every trick that they do leaves an indicator that you have to try and beat. One by one, everyone goes down trying to beat that line that the leader's set. You get

about a third of the way down the mountain, and the whole thing stops. The leader goes about a third of the way down, everyone takes their turn, and then whoever is the new leader (they spawn whoever had the best run on the last line), gets to lead off on the second round. And you basically just keep doing that all the way down the mountain.

IGN Xbox: Along those lines, another online question we'd have to ask is that a lot of the early Dreamcast games allowed people to sort of upload scores or upload ghost cars. Are you going to let people upload their top trick totals or their best lines, like the ones you just described, and then let people challenge them that way?

(continued on next page)

Carl: We're not planning on doing any upload-download stuff right now. We're basically planning for...I don't want to start talking about the sequel now, but the online component is something we're looking at for future iterations as a major push.

MS Representative: What? What future iterations are we talking about, again? [laughter all around]

Carl: Something we haven't talked about yet that I'm probably not supposed to mention or anything, yeah.

IGN Xbox: Awww, that's OK. The kids appreciate you being such a rebel! Unless our friends at Microsoft come in with the mighty hammer of censorship... I guess getting to the technology then – since we've managed to highlight some of the things you're not going to be doing, we're kind of curious, specifically, what has the Xbox technology allowed you guys to do, and what are some of the special features we'll be getting because of that technology?

Carl: The one that everyone seems to love the most, actually, which has really surprised the whole team, is the entire music thing. Ripping your own music tracks to the hard drive, and listening to that. For some reason, people are just absolutely eating that up. That's one use we have.

IGN Xbox: We'll bug you about that in more detail later, but please, continue...

Carl: [laughs] OK, so that's one big use. I'd say that the biggest use, though, is the system's flexibility. That isn't talking about its poly-pushing power, or ease of development or anything else. The sheer flexibility of the system, having the 64 megs of unified memory is just a huge bonus, and I've worked on PC and PS2 titles, as well, and this is actually, by far, the easiest system to develop for. Because, not only is it standardized, but it's very flexible. If you want to spend 40 megs on textures, go right ahead, you can do that. If you want to spend 2 megs on textures and spend 40 megs on AI stuff, you can do that, as well. From a design standpoint, I think it would be very difficult to do the kind of poly count we're doing on other systems with as much texture and detail as we have been able to do with Amped on the Xbox. The amount of memory just storing the hierarchy for our trees, because we have 15,000 trees in a level, that takes up more space than you have for memory on the whole for some other systems. So we're really pushing things to get this wide-open feel. If we were on other systems, we'd have to be generating procedural content that wouldn't be as unique. We'd have to be a bit more repetitious. But, given the amount of memory that Xbox has, and also the amount of polys it can push, we can really make a large area that's actually packed with stuff. You know, you can have large areas on other systems, but they won't be this rich. And

like I said, we're really pushing a ton of polys. For the terrain alone it's like 150,000 polys. Our riders are all 6-8 thousand, our trees, in their high LOD are 500-1000 polys per tree, so, we've got tons of stuff going on.

IGN Xbox: Do you think your trees will match up with the trees in Halo, which are, according to Bungie, "the coolest trees in the history of video games?" [laughter]

IGN Xbox: I want to get a little grudge match going here!

MS Rep: I knew you were going to bring that up! That's why I started laughing when Carl started talking about the trees!

Amped Interview (cont'd.)

IGN Xbox talks with Program Manager Carl Schnurr about the definitive Xbox snowboarding game.

IGN Xbox: Hey, you're not allowed to go there without getting grilled...

Carl: Well, I'm not gonna say anything, but I will say that at Gamestock, we were both "oogling" each other's tree and going "Oh, yeah?"

IGN Xbox: Little steam coming from the nostrils?

Carl: Yeah, little "How you doing that?" going on... No, we have a few tricks up our sleeves that you'll get to see at E3, and I think you'll be pleased.

IGN Xbox: And since you brought it up, I'm going to be a pain in the ass and give you a chance to sort of explain yourselves, as far as the poly counts go, and what the game is going to look like. There's been a big to-do about the screenshots that were released at Gamestock. Obviously, people release images that use models that will be in the final product, and everyone in the industry knows this is common practice, but the fanboys turned this thing into a witch-hunt. What happened there, and how indicative were those shots of the look we'll be seeing in the final product?

MS Rep: You mean "ScreenGate 2001?"

IGN Xbox: Yeah, a few system advocates figure out the obvious and have to share their newfound "genius" with the world. Ooooooh! Irritates the snot out of me. From what you guys are saying, we expect the game to look a lot like what you showed, anyways.

Carl: Basically, what happened was, as you know, marketing always wants stuff earlier than you're ready to hand it out. Like, for example, the case with E3. We're busting our butts to get our E3 builds done, and marketing, in order to have press stuff for E3, has to have stuff that's printable weeks ahead of time. So the screenshots inevitably lag behind what the product is actually looking like. And if you look at it early enough in the development cycle, you may not even have the ability to make screenshots; you may only have terrain, you may only have characters, whatever. The screenshots that were released were actually done months before Gamestock, and we just didn't have time to get new screens done in time that we're actually using everything in-game. Some of that actually was in-game, and some was not. So, honestly, that's essentially what happened. However, I think that, in the end, that will be the level of detail that we'll see in the game. We're not quite there yet for E3, but we're getting very close.

IGN Xbox: Can you describe how the whole career mode works a bit?

Carl: Sure. When you start out in the game, you're basically a hot local rider, and you're ranked like a 150th in the world. Every challenge you complete raises your world ranking by one, and at certain times, you'll be invited to a special mini-level and if you complete the challenges on that mini-level, you'll transition from being a hot local rider to being a shop-sponsored rider. Once you're a shop rider you go to the next mini level, and once you qualify, you go from being a shop rider to a team sponsored rider or a pro, and once you're a pro, you can become a superstar. And to become number one in the game, you basically have to complete every challenge there is.

I really think that people will get off on the whole media exposure thing, and I also think they'll get into how the sponsor and pro challenges work. Like for the sponsor challenge, you basically have a meter that tells you what the sponsor likes to see, because you're trying to impress someone, right? So for each sponsor challenge, say it's a Dragon Optical challenge, and he says "You know, we hear that the Dragon reps love to see inverts and stale fishes," and so, you have a little meter that pops up that shows you the level of interest that the sponsor has in your run. It goes from "bored" all the way up to "amped," and as you do tricks, it goes up, or as you do nothing, it pulls it back down, and to win the challenge, you have to end your run on amped. This is just one way we're taking a traditional gameplay challenge and putting a new spin on it, and we're doing that cross the board.

IGN Xbox: Sounds cool to us. We're looking forward to seeing the game at E3.

Mad Dash

Animals? Racing on two legs? Weird? Fun? Let's find out!

GAME INFO

Publisher	Eidos
Developer	Crystal Dynamics
Genre	Racing
Players	TBA
Release	Fall 2001

Crystal Dynamics is a pretty busy company lately. PlayStation 2 maniacs are awaiting Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver 2 for this summer and while Crystal D is working very hard on that title, they've also got the newly announced Blood Omen 2 to keep them busy. And while these two games are pretty huge, there's nothing quite bigger than having one of your projects scheduled for the launch of a new console. Mad Dash is such a title, and it is well underway. We got the chance to take a test run of the game today, and thought you'd like to know how it is coming along.

One of the most immediate things that got our attention is definitely the character design. Unique and cartoony, Crystal Dynamics spent a lot of time creating the look of each Dasher, and it shows. The level of detail, personality, and even the lighting effects are indicative of a level of quality that makes most games look silly, especially the idle animations. While we thought the characters looked impressive, nothing really prepared us for the levels themselves! It's really hard to describe each of the enormous tracks without saying, in a Chris Tucker-like voice, "daaaaaaaammn." This things are friggin' huge, people. As in, expect to dash for a good 5-7 minutes per outing, and each one is so packed with shortcuts and varied paths, you'll be hard-pressed to find the main course.

The cool part is, almost every shortcut is custom made for one of the game's three character types. Some will suit dashers, some basher, and others will be easier to reach for gliders. This creates a branch of different paths all intertwined to one huge stage. And to say the backgrounds look great is an understatement; there is so much going on in each of the colorful levels, you actually have to stop to really savor all glorious details.

One level that really stuck out in our heads was the Pipeworks. The course is completely underwater and, as the name would imply, is encased in huge pipes. As your race through the track, you'll eventually reach a huge transparent pipe where you can see underwater objects – fish, sharks, squids and even submarines. There was so much moving at once that we couldn't help but be impressed with the power of the Xbox. Not only were they see-through, but these things look shiny. The reflection mapping effect in this pipe is a sight to behold and we haven't seen an effect like it done so well in any other game.

Playing Mad Dash was one of the first times we got to try out the Xbox controller, and with this game, we felt the controls are just dandy. While all characters moves differently, controls were very responsive and the power-sliding mechanic was working pretty well; by pressing the R-Shift button, you'll initiate a power-slide that enables you to make turns with the maximum speed.

Overall, we came away pretty impressed. If we had to complain, there's only one concern we had for the game, and that's the framerate. Currently, the game runs slightly under 30 frames per second and while that's pretty good, the producer is definitely trying to have a silky smooth 60 fps when the game releases later this year at the Xbox launch. If that's the case, we're going to be making a mad dash ourselves to the nearest video game retailer later this year as well.

We'll be getting a better look at Mad Dash during E3, so be sure to check back for more impressions, as well as new media from the game, shortly after the show kicks off on May 17th.

This Month In DVD

The month of May brings a whole bunch of long awaited releases including, *The Complete Superman Collection* (previewed in last month's IGNunplugged), *The X-Files Complete Third Season, Dungeons and Dragons, Close Encounters of the Third Kind,* and *Traffic.*

The Rocky Collection also hits the shelves soon. Let me know how you feel about it. Personally, I think could forgoe Ivan Drago for another month if it would get *The Simpsons* here faster. But whatever.

Say, how do you think Fox should release *The Simpsons* onto the format? I think they should do it season by season, not three episodes or four episodes per disc. Would you pony up the cash for all *The Simpsons* episodes? That would be mighty expensive. How important are extra features? Just curious. Let me know: steven@ign.com. Oh, and if anyone from Fox is reading this, please be sure to send me every single episode so I can, you know, report on it and stuff. I love Fox. You guys ROCK.

But what was *Monkeybone?*

–Steven Horn (steven@ign.com)

STEVE HORN

Feature Story: From the Man of Steel to Scully and Mulder's third year together, these are the discs to get this May. pg. 67.

EDITOR'S TOP 5

1. *Charlie's Angels*
2. *Nurse Betty*
3. *Lawrence of Arabia*
4. *Spartacus, Criterion Col.*
5. *The Mummy - Ultimate Ed.*

EDITOR'S MOST WANTED

1. *Unbreakable*
2. *Castaway*
3. *Snatch*
4. *Dogma Special Edition*
5. *Pulp Fiction Special Ed.*

Snatch pg.68

The Mummy: Ultimate Edition pg.69

IN THIS ISSUE

Title: Superman: The Movie (Special Edition)
Release Date: 5/1
Summary: More than 20 years after it debuted in theaters, this remains one of the greatest comic book movies ever. Director Richard Donner guided Christopher Reeves in this breakthrough performance, finally bringing the genre to a mainstream audience. The jam-packed DVD features added scenes, commentary by Donner, 3 featurettes, deleted scenes, screen-tests, and more.

Title: The Magnificent Seven
Release Date: 5/8
Summary: John Sturges' landmark film is more than just a westernized Seven Samurai – it features gripping action and some of Steve McQueen and Yul Brynner's finest tough-guy acting. The DVD of this 1960 classic comes packing a brand new documentary, full-length commentary, and a photo gallery.

Title: X-Files: The Complete Third Season
Release Date: 5/8
Summary: If you're a believer (and you've got the dough), life doesn't get much better than a 7-disc set stuffed with every episode, a new documentary, Chris Carter interviews, deleted scenes, special effects clips, behind the scenes goodies, and more.

Title: Best in Show
Release Date: 5/15
Summary: A mocumentary about the dog show circuit and the bizzare humans on the other end of the leash. Waiting for Guffman may have had more laughs and Spinal Tap may have had more hair, but this puppy's got commentary by director/co-star Christopher Guest, deleted scenes, and an original featurette. Buy! Sit! Stay!

Title: Big Trouble In Little China (Special Edition)
Release Date: 5/22
Summary: John Carpenter brought tongue-in-cheek Hong Kong action to American movies about 15 years before America was ready for it. Now you can kick your feet up and watch Kurt Russell kick some butt from the comfort of your living room. Jammed with extras, this 2-disc set is a definite must-have.

Title: Close Encounters of the Third Kind (Collector's Edition)
Release Date: 5/29
Summary: Whip up a batch of mashed potatoes and get to make contact! The DVD release of this sci-fi classic starring Richard Dreyfuss has more extras than usual (for a Spielberg flick), including 11 deleted scenes, a full-length making-of documentary, and the 1977 featurette Watch the Skies.

Title: Traffic
Release Date: 5/29
Summary: This drug war epic of interwoven plotlines and ambiguous morality walked away with four Academy Awards, and with good reason. The DVD isn't quite as tricked out as one might hope, but it does come with some behind-the-scenes goodies, a featurette, TV spots, and a photo gallery.

DVD PREVIEW

Snatch

Get snome digital *Snatch.* Guy Ritchie's strong sophmore effort hits DVD this summer.

Did you see *Snatch?* If not, you missed out on one of the most frenetic and coolest films of 2000. Written and Directed by Guy Ritchie (husband to Madonna), Snatch features one of those huge ensemble casts that seem to be all the rage lately. Just ask Steven Soderbergh whose Oceans 11 remake features scores of A-listers.

Much like Ritchie's debut *Lock, Stock, and Two Smoking Barrels, Snatch* follows a cast of characters in interlocking stories throughout the film to one roaring conclusion. Worthy of taking a look because it features: a big huge diamond being escorted by Benecio Del Toro, Brad Pitt as a bare-knuckle boxer who refuses to take a fall, and soccer star Vinnie Jones as a London henchman named Bullet Tooth Tony. Fans of LS2SB will see the return of Jason Flemyng and Jason Statham as well.

The DVD will feature:

• Anamorphic video (right on!)
• Commentary from Director Guy Ritchie and Producer Matthew Vaughn
• "The Making of Snatch" featurette
• Storyboard to scene comparisons
• Deleted Scenes
• Snatch UK Trailer and Teaser campaigns as well as US campaigns
• Photo montage

GAME INFO

Publisher	Columbia
Release Date	7/3/01
Price	$27.95
Running Time	105 Minutes

DVD PREVIEW

Dogma: Special Edition

Holy Smith! *Dogma* finally gets the Pearly Gates treatment.

See, good things do come to those who wait. Dogma will be released this summer as a mondo 2-disc set. It's about time, no?

Dogma tells the story of two angels (Matt Damon and Ben Affleck) banished from Heaven and forced to spend eternity in Wisconsin. That is, until a mysterious source tips the pair off about a loophole in Catholicism that will allow them to return to Heaven. All they have to do is get to a church in New Jersey and walk through its archway. Sounds easy enough. The only problem is that if they succeed they will have proven God wrong and since God is infallible, to prove God wrong would destroy all existence. Sounds complicated? Yeah, but just wait until you see what happens next.

This 2-Disc DVD features some sweet extras:

• Commentary by Kevin Smith, Ben Affleck, Jason Lee, Jason Mewes, Scott Mosier and Vincent Pereira
• Technical commentary by Smith, Mosier, and Pereira
• Three major scenes done on storyboards
• One hour and 40 minutes of deleted scenes!
• Cast and crew outtakes
• Jay and Silent Bob's Secret Stash Spot
• Talent files
• Easter eggs a'plenty
• "Follow The Buddy Christ" ? Not sure what this is, but it sounds interesting.

GAME INFO

Publisher	Sony Pictures
Release	6/26/01
Price	$29.95
Running Time	128 Minutes

DVD REVIEW

DVD

The Mummy: Ultimate Edition

Unwrap this bad boy if you truly dug *The Mummy.*

Though the timing on the release of the Ultimate Edition is a bit suspect, it's still an excellent gift to the mountains of The *Mummy* fans who've been clamoring for even more Mummy-licious goodness since the release of the special edition in 1999.

The most important question to wrestle with is: Is it worth coughing up more money for an Ultimate Edition when I already have the frickin' Collector's Edition? Well of course, silly! If you're like me, you've already got two versions of *Se7en, Boogie Nights, T2:Judgment Day, A Bug's Life* and *The Doors.* Like it or not, ultimate editions or whatever studios call stacked re-issues nowadays (Cherry On Top edition? The Kitchen Sink Edition? Better Than Sex Edition?) are here to stay. In this case, the extras DO make it worth the extra coin. For starters, you get a Brendan Fraser commentary track that is hilarious, plus a mess of additional extras. The biggest selling point for me though is the fact that this baby is fully anamorphic.

The disc also has a lot of extra goods on *The Mummy Returns,* which is pretty cool now but will be rather useless once TMR hits DVD. Okay, maybe not useless, but a lot less of a selling point. No, you want this one for the quality of the transfer.

DANCER IN THE DARK	
Publisher	Universal
Genre	Horror/Action
Sound	Dolby Digital, DTS
Rating	PG-13
Director	Stephen Somners

The Movie

The new, 1999 version of *The Mummy* blends comedy and action/adventure much more than the original. The main hero, Rick O'Connell (Brendan Fraser) is part Indiana Jones, part Lara Croft (of course, not *those* parts), and part, well, Brendan Fraser.

In ancient Egypt, Imhotep (Arnold Vosloo), the High Priest of Osiris has been secretly getting it on with the untouchable Anck-Su-Namum, a ceremonial virgin whom no man must touch. When Pharaoh finds out, he and his followers are mummified alive, with Imhotep's sealed with a spell that will keep him tormented by flesh eating scarabs for thousands of years. The problem being, if he's ever resurrected, he would bring with him the plagues of Egypt (Read: Exodus. Plagues = Bad).

Fast forward to 1923; can you guess what happens? And it is up to our hero and his leading lady Rachel Weisz to put Imhotep back into the ground.

It ain't rocket science and it doesn't take itself seriously, but it's a lot of fun. Great date film, great group film – it's a diversion flick, so sit back and enjoy.

The Video

Anamorphic loveliness. Just for fun, I put in the 1999 non-anamorphic edition and I could see a marked difference between the two. But frankly, you really have to look hard for any flaws in this (or any other *Mummy* edition).

The colors are nice and natural. Since much of the film takes place in the desert or outside, golds and yellows really pop out in this edition. Another notable showcase scene for color is the initial library sequence where we first meet Evelyn. Nice, rich browns. Nice, rich Rachel Weisz.

The Audio

I screened this one on my Klipsch Reference system and was floored. The soundstaging for The Mummy is amazingly rich and varied. You can chose from Dolby 5.1 or dts. The sand-face-wall-of-terror bit completely taxed my sub so much that I kept watching it over and over.

The score by Jerry Golsmith is properly large and referential to the subject matter. Lots of big orchestral pieces as per his other scores like *Mulan* and the brilliant *L.A. Confidential.*

All in all, you need this one if you profess to be any kind of *The Mummy* fan.

RATINGS

The Movie: 8   Audio: 8   Video: 9   Extras: 9

OVERALL SCORE: **9**

Re-Animator

Severed heads? Blood and gore? Exxxccellent.

In Re-Animator a disembodied head sexually assaults a woman, covering her in the blood that is oozing out of its neck stump. If that sounds like something you'd like to see, then you're Re-Animator's target audience. If that sounds too extreme for you, there's a review of The Mummy Ultimate Edition floating around here somewhere.

Based on a series of stories by the great H.P. Lovecraft, Re-Animator tells the story of Herbert West, a student at Miskatonic University, and his search for a serum that will bring the dead back to life. He ends up rooming with straight arrow student Dan Caine, whose girlfriend Megan is the daughter of the dean and the lust object of Doctor Halsey, the big shot at the hospital.

West creates a very cool looking glowing green serum that can indeed bring the dead back to life, but he isn't sure what dosages are needed or how long after death the serum must be injected. Halsey tries to steal West's work after a … debacle with a crazed zombie and the dean, and ends up with a shovel in his neck. West re-animates the separated parts of the doctor, and the story really takes off from there…

DANCER IN THE DARK	
Publisher	Anchor Bay
Genre	Horror
Sound	Dolby Digital Mono
Rating	Unrated
Director	Stuart Gordon

In its full, unrated glory (which is actually shorter than the R-rated version), Re-Animator is one of the goriest films of all time. Exploding eyeballs, heads crushed to paste, people attacked by living intestines, zombies in various states of mutilation, cats cut in half, and autopsies only scratches the surface of the bloody goodness of this one. Not for the weak stomached, Re-Animator is sure to delight even the most jaded gorehound.

But the movie isn't just blood and guts. Unlike most of the rest of the crop of modern splatter movies, Re-Animator doesn't let the special effects get in the way of honest-to-goodness storytelling and good solid characters. It also has a great anarchic sense of fun - while the proceedings are never taken too seriously, the movie isn't full of the goofy Freddy Krueger-esque one liners and jokes that seem to ruin the mood of too many movies these days.

The Video

It's an old, low-budget movie, so I'm assuming that source materials weren't the best for this transfer. Still, I thought that the picture was pretty soft, and noticed some artifacting and grain. Not a great transfer, but the blood looks good

The Audio

You can hear the blatant Psycho rip-off soundtrack in mono only. Clean, but obviously nothing to write home about.

The Extras

This is where the disc pays off. Elite ported over everything (as far as I know) from the laser edition of the movie. We get two very good commentaries, one from director Stuart Gordon, who is pretty serious and has great info, and one with producer Brian Yuzna and stars Jeffrey Combs, Robert Sampson, Barbara Crampton, and Bruce Abbot. They have a lot of fun, and the track is a blast.

Also included are over 20 minutes of R-rated footage. When the film went to the MPAA, the cuts they demanded would have made the movie about 40 minutes long, so extra footage was shot, only intended for the R-rated release. While it would have been nice to see this as a seamless branching feature, at least you have the footage.

There is a deleted dream sequence, which includes even more naked Barbara Crampton, as well as theatrical trailers and TV spots that I never even knew existed.

RATINGS

The Movie: 9   Audio: 6   Video: 5   Extras: 8

OVERALL SCORE: 9

This Month In For Men

Greetings. I'm Adam Douglas, the Music Technology Editor at IGN.com. You may have been a little confused in the past, seeing both my and Mike Wiley's names under IGN For Men's Gear section, and not known what the difference was betwen us. Well, to put it simply: he writes about the stuff that plays music, and I write about the stuff that enables you to make music. Easy enough, right?

It's an exciting time to be into music creativity. All of the cool products first shown at the winter NAMM are finally hitting the stores, such as Yamaha's Loop Factory tabletop synth series and Native Instruments' MP3-mixing Traktor. And most of it is really affordable. Unless you've got your heart set on the Nord Lead 3, most of this really rocking gear can be had for under $500. Yes, it's a fine time to be into music creativity.

ADAM DOUGLAS

Feature Story: Make Music! Want to create your own electronic studio without breaking the bank? Check this out. pg. 72.

EDITOR'S TOP 5

1. Reason (Propellerhead)
2. Alesis airFX
3. The Red Sound line-up
4. Cubase VST 5
5. IXOS Ministry of Sound DJ 1001 Headphones

EDITOR'S MOST WANTED

1. Electrix Repeater
2. Alesis airSynth
3. Yamaha DX200 Loop Factory
4. Cycling 4-Radial
5. Boss SP-303 Dr. Sample

Reason pg.73

Sonomic pg.73

IN THIS ISSUE

Make Music!
Music gear doesn't have to be expensive. Check out these different, inexpensive options.

Everybody likes to listen to music. But for some reason, not everyone feels they can make it. There are a number of reasons for this but budget shouldn't have to be a concern. Sure, walking into Guitar Center and checking out all of the expensive keyboards can make music production seem a little out of reach, but if you take a closer look, you'll find there are always ways to make your dreams come true.

Studio Gear

When you think of making music like the big boys, what comes to mind? The studio. Wasted, skinny dudes holed up in dark, expensive studios for days on end, blowing the record company's money and playing ping-pong. True, but I'm talking about the home MIDI studio.

The Groovebox approach is one of the more popular ways to break into studio production. The main attraction is the price: you can get yourself an all-in-one piece of gear without having to part with a kidney or sell crack to high schoolers. Both the Roland MC-303 and the Korg Electribe EM-1 have all the sounds you need to make basic songs. Beats, bass, leads, and effects are all present and accounted for. The price? Only $400.

Software

The chief attraction to the software approach is the low cost. If you've already got a slammin' computer (and it does take a hot box to do this, believe me), you can get yourself set up for music for nothing. Pro Tools Free, the free version of the industry standard audio program from Digidesign, is an excellent way to break into the world of digital audio without hemorhaging your bank account. Check out www.digidesign.com for the download. If you don't have DSL or a cable modem, you can also order the program on a CD for a nominal fee of $10.

DJ

Strictly speaking, mixing records isn't making music. However, the stuff that turntablists do – skratching, beat juggling – is. While you'll never be able to actually do what the big boys do with budget DJ packages, you will be able to find out if mixing and skratching is something you want to continue with. Both the Gemini First Mix Level DJ Package ($200) and the Stanton All In One DJ Pak ($400) come with two belt-drive turntables, a mixer, carts, and headphones.

If you want to skip the baby step and go straight for the real thing, you'll need to fork over $500 each for two Technics SL-1200 MK2s or M3Ds. For the mixer, I recommend you get a good, solid two channel mixer with a fader that won't wear out. The Focus optical fader (which comes on the SK-2F) is one such fader. For $400, it's a solid, medium priced piece of gear. Don't forget your cartridges either. Shure's M44-7s are good battle carts.

Hopefully this gives you some ideas on getting started making music. Remember to just get out there and have fun being creative. That's what it's all about.

RATINGS

Performance: 10.0   Build Quality: 10.0   Features: 9.0   Ease of Use: 10.0   Value: 9.0

OVERALL SCORE: 9.5

GEAR REVIEW

Reason

Music Creation gets simple and powerful with Propellerhead's powerful new software package.

Computers have made music production unbelievably easy and - more often than not - unbelievably complicated. Reason, a full music-making program from Propellerhead Software, has taken the frustration out of computer-based MIDI composition. With its full suite of instruments, you literally don't need anything else to make great-sounding music.

Reason is an all-in-one music production program that replicates a rack of electronic instruments. Everything is included, from mixer to synthesizer to sequencer. However, unlike with a physical rack, you're limited neither by space nor finance – whatever you need, and however much of it you need, is available instantly. Your only ceiling is your computer's ability to handle it all.

It's got a synthesizer, a sample player, a drum machine, a mixer, a loop player, and more effects than you'll know what to do with. Every instrument is strong in its own way, and almost infinitely useful, as you can load up as many of each as you need.

Reason really is an amazing program. It's so easy to use, sounds so good, and is so powerful, it deserves to be held up in awe with similarly brilliant programs such as PhotoShop and Pro Tools. It's not perfect of course – you do need an external controller to play notes – but for the price, you get a whole lot of creative power. If you only ever buy one piece of music software, make it Reason.

PRODUCT INFO

Publisher	Propellerhead
Platform	PC/MAC
Requirements	
MAC - 166 MHz 604/64MB RAM	
PC - PII 233 MHz/64 MB RAM	
Price	$399.00

RATINGS:
Performance: 10.0 Build Quality: 9.9 Features: 9.9 Ease of Use: 10.0 Value: 10.0

OVERALL SCORE: 9.8

GEAR REVIEW

Sonomic

What do you do when you need a fretless bass sample? You hit up pay download site Sonomic.

With the proliferation of affordable loop-based music production programs such as Acid, sample dealers previously bound to CD and CD-ROM have taken to the Internet, offering downloads of high-quality, copyright-free samples for relatively low prices. Sonomic is one such site, with everything from guitars to special effects ready to be incorporated into your latest opus.

Sonomic is extremely easy to navigate. Just choose the instrument type (say, guitar), a sub-type (such as electric), and then music style and BPM. You instantly get a list of professional samples to download in either .wav or .aiff file types. You can preview the sample as a Real or Windows Media file before you decide to pay for it.

Sonomic excels at the acoustic instruments, such as guitar, bass, and percussion. There's tons of these and they all sound great. I wasn't as impressed with the synth samples - you'd have to do a lot of manipulation to get the synths to sound useable, and there's already free analog stuff on the Net. But for acoustic grabs, you can't go wrong. The prices are either $.99 (one-shot samples) or $1.99 (loops). The Special FX are rather expensive at $5.99 and $9.99.

While $9.99 is a lot of cash for a car crash, $1.99 is money well spent for a clean-sounding guitar loop when you absolutely need one.

PRODUCT INFO

Manufacturer	Sonomic
Price	$.99-9.99
Availability	Now
Site: http://www.sonomic.com	

OVERALL SCORE: 7.9

RATINGS:
Features: 6.0 Ease of Use: 9.0 Value: 7.0

ign sci-fi

This Month In Sci-Fi

Everyone always asks me why I keep going to comic book conventions -- to the uneducated eye, they seem to be nothing more than the same series of repetitious geek-tastic events. Since April constitutes the sorta-kinda official beginning of the con season, I'd best explain myself.

At this weekend's WonderCon, I observed the following things:

1. Sassy Bat-scribe Devin Grayson waxing enthusiastic about her new gig penning the exploderific Ghost Rider miniseries.

2. A certain washed-up '80s heartthrob demanding $10 per photo op.

3. My boss getting all excited about finding one of the original Jawa figures with the cloth cape.

Need I say more? Cons are all about providing one-of-a-kind moments such as these -- and we're all about capturing them for your reading pleasure. This month, we've got more stuff covering the kind of geekdom that cons celebrate -- from Transformers to crazy cartoonists to the comics you absolutely, positively *must* read.

SARAH KUHN

Feature Story: Genndy Tartakovsky, creator of Dexter's Laboratory, talks about new developments and new shows. pg. 78.

EDITOR'S TOP 5

1. Powerpuff Girls (DVD)
2. Fiesta Giles (figure)
3. *Planetary* (graphic novels)
4. *Star Wars* Kubrick knock-offs
5. *Josie and the Pussycats* videos

EDITOR'S MOST WANTED

1. Grayson's Ghost Rider (comic)
2. *Fray* by Joss Whedon
3. New episodes of *Dexter's Laboratory*
4. Morrison and Quiteley's *X-Men*
5. More *Spider-Girl*

Star Blazers   pg.67

Black Convoy   pg.64

IN THIS ISSUE
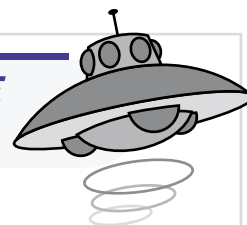
Comics for Big Boys

Three comics for people who look for more than a hot bod in tight spandex.

Think comics are just for kids? Think again. Every week, IGN Sci-Fi takes a look at the best of what the national comic market has to offer, from familiar mainstream superhero comics to imports and indies from off the beaten track. Each month, we'll take a look at a trio of those titles and profile them right here, showing you some of the wide variety of what the current comic market offers today. Who knows, maybe you'll head down to your local comic shop and take a chance on a couple issues. After all, at $2 to $3, they're about the cheapest thing you're going to find for sale covered by IGN.

Gotham Knights #16	Publisher	DC Comics

Love this comic. Love Devin Grayson's writing. She likes to play with the supernatural, which hasn't been a big part of Batman's life outside of the JLA, but she works the angle well enough to the point where it fits right in with Gotham's urban sprawl.

The writing is very good – Grayson manages to capture Batman's intensity, concern for innocents, and the attitude of the cop on the street to the Caped Crusader all within a few panels. When combined with Robinson's cinematic penciling (amazing splash panel on page 12 and 13, for example) and Floyd's moody inks, what you get is a superbly-crafted issue.

Quality all around. Don't hesitate to pick it up.

Usagi Yojimbo #47	Publisher	Dark Horse

Sakai's storytelling is very, very fluid with a considerable amount of bounce. Reading his scripts is like having a bedtime story told to you – it's got that fairy tale sprightliness to it and that innocence with an underlying malevolence. Furthermore, the code of honor by which Usagi operates lends a somewhat moralistic slant to the whole affair, making it more akin to the classic fables of yesterday than anything else. Yet despite the fable-esque rendering, it never gets preachy. In fact, the sly mixture of humor and violence sees that it doesn't.

And Sakai's art? Well, it's a wonderful marriage of animorphic cartoonery and crisp visceral action. Not that I'm a morbid fetishist, but I just love how he inserts death's head icons into the word balloons of the characters who die. It's nice touches like this that make this book a joy to peruse.

The Atomics #14	Publisher	AAA Pop Comics

If you haven't been following The Atomics, then I heartily suggest that you get down to your nearest comic shop, pronto, and buy the super-sized edition which collects all the early issues into one enormous (and affordable) packet.

This comic rocks in that fun, Kirby-esque style, not to mention the dollops of art deco glitz thrown in for good measure. Aside from that, all you need to know is that this is a spin-off from Madman, the snappiest comic to come down the pike in the past decade.

In terms of storyline, alas, this is the next to final ish in the series as Allred is off to Marvel Land to revamp an X-title. At any rate, our heroes are trapped in an Earth gone wild, which means that it's populated by furry Mooks and giant toothy worms with attitude.

At any rate, this title is cool and hip, so what are you waiting for?

Also Recommended:

Black Panther by Marvel Comics
Daredevil by Marvel Comics
Green Arrow by DC Comics
Harley Quinn by DC Comics
Rising Stars by Image/Top Cow
Sam and Twitch by Image
Savage Dragon by Image
Spider-Girl by Marvel Comics
Swamp Thing by Vertigo
Top Ten by America's Best Comics
Transmetropolitan by Vertigo

Be sure to visit IGN Sci-Fi every 6 PM PST for a whole new batch of reviews and columns covering the week in comics.
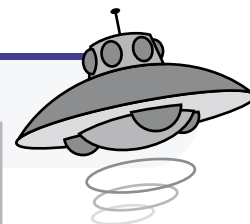
Echoes for Otakus
Star Blazers: A true anime classic.

There's word that Star Blazers, one of the classic anime titles of all time, may soon join Cartoon Network's much-loved Toonami line-up. Thus, this month we turn our tiny spotlight on the brave crew of the Argo (or Yamato, depending on where you're watching it).

Star Blazers (or, as it is known in Japan, Space Cruiser Yamato) was one of the first anime series to find a following here in the U.S. Created by Leiji Matsumoto, Space Cruiser Yamato first saw the light of day in 1976. It was then re-edited heavily for content and made into a kids' show -- Star Blazers here in the U.S.

Star Blazers	
Publisher	Tapeworm Video
Running Time	~100 Minutes
Rating	NR
Formats	VHS, DVD
Translation	Sub, Dub

The Story: An unknown race of aliens known as the Gamilon have attacked the Earth and made it inhospitable to life. When things look bleak, another alien, Princess Starsha, sends a message, promising a way to reverse all the damage done to Earth. By retrieving the Cosmic DNA from her planet, Iscandar, humanity can undo all of the radioactive damage done by the Gamilon. The only thing standing in their way is the long distance to Iscandar, the Gamilon forces, the time limit and the fact that all of Earth's space ships have been damaged or destroyed.

In an effort to save life as we know it, a sunken WWII battleship, the Argo, is lifted from the bottom of the ocean, and repaired and retrofitted for space travel. Captain Abraham Avatar leads the trusty crew, which also includes hot nurse Nova Forrester (who had to be the precursor to all the waif-like supermodels of today). The crew only has one year to reach Iscandar, get the Cosmic DNA and return to Earth to undo all of the damage -- no pressure.

The Otaku Take: I'll get the small complaints out of the way first. It is very easy for newbie anime fans to dismiss this anime classic due to its art. Let's be honest, it was 1979 when the show first arrived here in the States -- animation was all Looney Tunes and Disney movies. That made it original and exciting. However, when compared with shows like Cowboy Bebop or Gundam Wing, the animation seems simple and outdated. The show uses tame and fuzzed colors and the action is, at times, very slow. Star Blazers also features the simplest voice acting you will ever hear. Oh, and what is with them pants??!!

However, fret not. What the show lacks in visuals, it more than makes up for in its story concepts. There is a reason why the ship was renamed the Argo -- as in Jason and the Golden Fleece. This is an adventure in the grandest of senses. In every episode, you've got your action, your intrigue and a smattering of humor. Yet the shadow always returns when the dude at the end reminds you that there are only so many days 'til Earth becomes a dead planet. Gulp.

In addition to the Toonami rumblings, there's also a Star Blazers movie rumored to be in the works, so hopefully I'll soon get to re-live another crucial piece of my childhood.
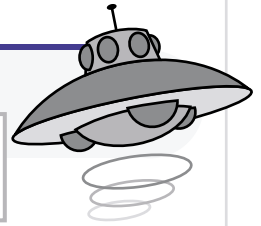
Transformers: Black Battle Convoy

When Optimus Prime goes bad. And the best Transformer eve.

You know, I was actually debating whether or not to import this toy, or take the gamble and wait and see if it showed up in the American release of Car Robots under the Robots in Disguise label. Last I heard, Black Battle Convoy, the Bruticus repaint, and JRX were still up in the air as far as release was concerned, and I became overwhelmed with paranoia and ended up getting Black Battle Convoy (BBC) in a trade deal with a friend of mine who sells imports. All I can say is that this figure is so damn cool -- it's times like this that I'm glad I'm horrendously impatient.

For those that don't know, BBC is a repaint of Laser Rod Optimus Prime, a.k.a. Optimus Octane, a.k.a. Battle Convoy in Japan. You may not have heard of him, as he was one of the last figures released under the Generation 2 label towards the end of that line. He also happens to be quite possibly the best figure to come out of the whole G2 thing as well, and is undoubtedly the best mold Optimus Prime has ever received. BBC may lack a few things that the Optimus incarnation had (he's missing his light-up feature and decals for his base), but I think the truly wicked paint job more than makes up for it. Makes you wonder why they didn't come up with an evil character that looks like Optimus a lot sooner (and no, Optimal Megatron doesn't count).

Vehicle mode is a tanker truck with a long nose cab. It's a pretty sizable toy too -- about two feet in length. The sides of the tanker trailer has a great chrome paint job, and the rear end features a license plate that says "Black Convoy" with D-012 (his catalog number) below it. The top has a disc launcher featuring the G2 Autobot symbol, which you can rotate around and fire by turning the back knob. The detail in the molding is excellent -- there's very little that would indicate that this is actually a Transformer and not just some toy truck. It's not as colorful as the original paint job, but I like it better.

Transformation is simple enough. The cab comes off, pull down and separate the legs, separate the front end of the cab to form the shoulders, pull out the head, and you're done. Easy transformation, but the results are impressive. In robot mode, BBC is about seven or eight inches tall, and looks extraordinarily badass. With 20 points of articulation, you can get him into all sorts of dynamic poses.

BBC is a fantastic repaint of what I would consider to be one of the top five best Transformer molds ever made, and is definitely more than worthy of being picked up. The question is do you import it now, or do you wait and see if Hasbro will release it as part of the Robots in Disguise line up? Yeah, he's the primary villain in half the episodes so it seems unlikely that he won't be released, but you never know...

--Mike Kiksch
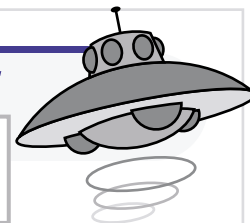
Inside Dexter's Laboratory
Genndy Tartakovsky talks 'toons.

Genndy Tartakovsky has a schedule that would put any mad scientist to shame.

The creator of Cartoon Network's loony, pop culturally literate delight, Dexter's Laboratory, gets up at 6 in the morning to work an insane amount of hours on his current pet projects.

How exactly does Genndy keep the mind behind our favorite kid mad scientist up and running?

"I drink a lot of Coke," he says. "But otherwise, I'm a morning person by nature, so I don't need any extra stimulants." Pause. "Except a couple of heroin shots here and there."

Relax, kids – though Genndy's as deadpan as they come, we do believe that's a joke.

DEXTER'S LABORATORY	
Network	Cartoon Network
Time Slot	Weekdays, Various

In other words, he's nothing like young Dexter, a squat, orange-haired scientist kid who speaks with a heavy accent of undetermined origin. "Dee Dee!" he chastises his lithe, pink-swathed older sister who is forever ruining his grand experiments, "You arrre soooo stu-peed, stu-peed, stuuu-peed!"

Uh, yeah, why is Dexter the only one in his family with that weird accent? "'Cause he's a scientist," says Genndy, once again deadpan as can be. "I think he needs to talk like a scientist."

Of course. How could we be so stu-peed.

All kidding aside, Genndy is getting even less sleep than usual these days: he's got new episodes of Dexter's set to bow in November, and a new animated action series, Samurai Jack, which follows a great warrior displaced to the future, ready to premiere on Cartoon Network in August.

In other words, he's going to be needing more, er, stimulants than ever.

IGN Sci-Fi: So these new episodes of Dexter's are going to have a different format...

Genndy: Yeah, before we've been doing seven-minute Dexter's, and we made a few of them that were 11 minutes. The thing that we found is that 11 minutes is a little too long, and seven minutes is a little too short. So we're going to have two nine minute episodes and then a little short four minute episode – a little joke, a real simple idea.

**IGN Sci-Fi:** And are we going to see Monkey and the Justice Friends?

Genndy: No, it's pretty much gonna be just Dexter. I think Monkey shows up a couple times, but the Justice Friends don't. Twenty-six more segments [comprising 13 episodes] is really not that much more, so we really wanted to focus, and there were so many things we wanted to do with Dexter.

IGN Sci-Fi: So what kinds of trouble are we going to see him getting into?

Genndy: Well, we actually see the origin of [Dexter's nemesis] Mandark. How Mandark came to be, how he got his name and the whole thing. From child to evil genius. And we find out what Dad does for a living. Little things like that that are a lot of fun. And Dexter's naked a bunch of times.
(continued on the next page)
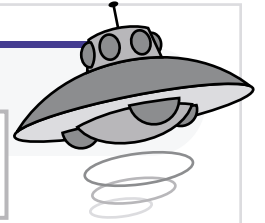
Inside Dexter's Laboratory (cont'd.)
Genndy Tartakovsky talks 'toons.

IGN Sci-Fi: Of course. Switching over to your new show, Samurai Jack, which launches in August – it seems very different from anything in the current 'toon landscape. How did you get the idea?

Genndy: The whole thinking about it was that we're going to do an action show, because after doing Dexter's, I really wanted to do something very different. I like samurais, and to have samurais, I wanted to have real fighting and real action. But you can't do that to humans, obviously, so I decided, "Oh, what if they're robots, we could probably do that." So I decided there needed to be some kind of future element to it. And then the story just started to come together.

It is going to be very different, but it's not just a dramatic show, there's definitely some laughter and some comedy in it. Most action shows are kind of dark and brooding, like Batman, but this one is much lighter.

IGN Sci-Fi: And what can you tell us about the look of it?

Genndy: Well, first of all, it doesn't have any black outlines on any of the characters. So it has a very unique look, and it's kind of dating back to old '50s Disney, like Sleeping Beauty, and to the Golden Books. It has a very storybook feel to it.

IGN Sci-Fi: Does Samurai Jack have any sidekicks?

Genndy: He's kind of by himself. But his main villain is called Aku, and he's an evil shape-shifting wizard. He's the reason Jack got sent into the future – he sent him there. And so now he tries to find his way back. The evil shape-shifting wizard runs the future, and he always tries to destroy Jack, because Jack is trying to undo all the years of evil Aku has done.

IGN Sci-Fi: What are some of the influences on the show?

Genndy: It's kind of taking all the stuff I love about Raiders of the Lost Ark, all the old Kurosawa samurai movies, and the Coen brothers films and Sam Raimi films and all these things that I really enjoy watching and I want more of – I made [them] all part of it.

IGN Sci-Fi: Speaking of influences, Dexter's obviously draws a lot from comic books and old cartoons and such. If you had to survive the rest of your life with only one comic book, one television show, and one cartoon series, what would you pick and why?

Genndy: Wow! For the comic book, the Frank Miller Wolverine, 'cause [it's] the ultimate comic book. It's got action, it's got characters, and no matter how many times I read it, it's incredible each time. Television show would be Seinfeld. Great TV show, great writing. I still laugh every time. And cartoon series...whew. Probably the Tex Avery library. 'Cause they're the most beautiful, most well-timed, well-executed cartoons made. It's funny, cartoony animation, nothing based on real life. The people who made 'em were just animating from their hearts and their guts. It's raw and amazing and beautiful.

Invincibility
If those pesky aliens are giving you a hard time, enter the Invincibility Code and they'll never kill you again. First pause the game. Now while holding down L2 and R2, press up, up, down, down, left, left, right, right, square, triangle, square, triangle, select, and finally start.

Naked Kurt
Want to know if Kurt wears boxers or briefs? Find out which with the Naked Kurt Code. From the Start screen of MDK 2: Armageddon, hold down L2 and R2, and press square, square, triangle, and square.

Max's Slo Mo Mode
Want to check out the fine details in the animation? Slow it all down with Max's Slo Mo Code. While holding down Max's shoot button press Max's equip weapons button three times.

Farting Doc
Doctor Hawkins needs a new diet. At any time while playing the Doctor hold down L2 and R2, and press in on both control sticks. Now you can watch Doctor Hawkins do something "Nasty".

Racecar Camera Mode
Feel like you're playing MDK2 from the point of view of a track camera at the Indy 500 with the Racecar Camera Code. First pause the game. Now while holding down L2 and R2, press circle, x, circle, and x.

Stationary Camera Mode
Tired of that camera following you around wherever you go? Enter the Stationary Camera Code and you'll get an idea how huge some of these rooms are. First pause the game. Now while holding down L2 and R2, press circle, x, circle, and triangle.

Matrix Camera Mode
While the game is paused press L1 and R1. This code removes the Pause Menu, giving you an unobstructed view of the spinning Matrix Camera Mode while the game is paused.

A Little Piece of Home
While playing through level 5 take a moment to stop and look through the alien telescope. To activate the telescope you must first destroy the BottRock Generator, and the panel on the ledge above the telescope. Now shoot the telescope lens to move it into a position where you can look through it to see crack animator Russ Rice on the Bioware balcony having a puff with some Conehead visitors.

King of the Coneheads
In the Spider Room of level 7 one of the Sniper Balls will unleash a pack of Coneheads. Rather than shooting them, just stand around and wait. If you look carefully into the middle of the room while standing on the upper ledge you may just be lucky enough to see the King of the Coneheads!

The Hidden Castle in the Sky
In level 7as you are coming out of the tunnel toward the platform with the boss fight you will see two antennas which Kurt can jump up on. This can be difficult, but keep trying. Now turn around and face the tunnel that you came out of and jump to the roof of the tunnel. Now turn to your left and start shooting low at the sky with your Chaingun. You should eventually see your shots hitting something. It is an invisible walkway. Jump down on to it and keep shooting. Keep following the path of ricochet particles until you reach a little yellow square. It is a fan that will take you up to the next invisible walkway. Use your parachute and fly up. It takes quite a while to reach the top of the airflow, so be patient. Once you are at the top, rotate while firing your gun and look for the same ricochet effect and then fly towards it. Follow this the same as before and eventually you will come to the hidden castle. Take a look around the castle and you might discover something interesting.

MDK 2 Development Team are Stars
While playing through level 4 don't forget to take a moment to gaze at the stars in the large arena with the three Poopsy Generators. Be sure to kill all of the enemies in this room first so you can star gaze without getting killed. Now, using Kurt Hectic's sniper scope, zoom in on certain special stars in the sky (they are usually slightly pinkish color). There you will find the crack team that made MDK2 possible gazing back down at you, along with their Wu Tang Clan names.

Unlock Bonus Match Up
The Bonus Match-Up is a sweet new gameplay mode that allows you to wrestle in some awesome new arenas with some of the tough-to-unlock wrestlers in the game, including the drooling alieans Kang and Kodos and Itchy and Scratchy.

To unlock this mode, go to the "Press Start" screen and press "CIRCLE, UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT." When you input the code correctly, "Bonus Match Up" will appear at the top of the screen. Now when you press start, the Bonus Match Up will be available on the mode selection screen.

Unlock Bumble Bee Man
To unlock Bumble Bee Man for use, wrestle and beat him in the New Challenger Circuit. The next time you select wrestlers, he will be in the line-up. Don't forget to save!

Unlock Frink
To unlock Professor Frink for wrasslin', beat him in the Champion Circuit. The next time you select wrestlers, he will be in the line-up. Don't forget to save!

Unlock Moe the Bartender
To unlock Moe for as a wrestler, beat him in the Defender Circuit. The next time you select wrestlers, he will be in the line-up. Don't forget to save!

Unlock Ned Flanders
Okalee Dokalee! To unlock Ned Flanders for use, wrestle and beat him in the Champion Circuit. The next time you select wrestlers, he will be in the line-up. Don't forget to save!

Spider-Man *dc*

Unlock Everything
To unlock everything this game has to offer, IGN has the ultimate cheat code for you! Go to the Cheats section of the Special menu and enter the following code: LEANEST. If you do it correctly, the screen will shake. This will unlock all costumes, covers, levels and cheats, so use it wisely!

Get Full Health
At the Cheat Screen, enter "WEAKNESS" to give the wallcrawler Full Health.

Invulnerable Webhead
To make Spidey feel no pain, enter "ADMNTIUM" at the Cheat screen.

Play as Stick Spidey
To play as a stick version of the webslinger, enter "STICKMAN" in the Cheats screen.

Spidey the Censor
Access the Special option from the Main Menu. Now select Cheats. From here you may enter your favorite "Cuss" word and watch Spidey pop up from the bottom of the screen and swipe your nastiness away and replace it with some sort of "Freudian Slip". We found our swear words being turned into some of the following: TAFFY, DONUT, LOBSTER, SODA POP, POTATO, BUNNY, FLOWER, SUGAR, NICE, PRETTY, LOVE, CAKE, CLOUD, HONEY and BALLOON. I'm sure there are more, but we all just got grounded for entering some of those words.

Unlimited Webbing
No longer will you wish for a little more web juice. By entering "GLANDS" into the Cheat Menu you'll grant yourself the power of Unlimited Webbing.

Unlock All Characters
To unlock all the Characters in the Gallery, enter "RGSGLLRY" on the Cheat screen.

Unlock Level Select
Go to the Cheats menu and type "MME WEB" to unlock Level Select. Now you'll be able to skip around the game!

Spider-Man (con't.) *dc*

Unlock Pulsating Head
To see Spidey with a pounding headache, unlock the Pulsating Head mode on the Cheat screen by entering "EGOTRIP."

Unlock all Comic Books
Enter the code "FANBOY" into the Cheat screen to unlock the Comic Collection in the Gallery.

Unlock all Game Covers
To unlock all of the comic book covers, input "KIRBYFAN" into the Cheat screen. This will unlock all Game Covers in the Gallery.

Unlocking Costumes
To unlock the various costumes Spidey dons during the game, go to the Cheat screen and enter the following codes to achieve the desired effect.

Amazing Bagman: KICK ME
Ben Reilly: CLUBNOIR
Captain Universe: TRISNTNL
Peter Parker: MRWATSON
Quick Change: SM LVIII
Scarlet Spider: XILRTRNS
Spider-Man 2099: MIGUELOH
Spider-Man Unlimited: SYNOPTIC
Symbiote: SECRTWAR

Knockout Kings 2001 *psx*

Unlock Barry Sanders
In the Career Mode, enter "SANDERS" as the name of your boxer. When you begin, your boxer will look just like the Detroit Lions' great Barry Sanders.

Unlock the Clown
You've always wanted to hit a clown... now you can hit others as a clown! Just enter "CLOWN" as your boxer name in Career Mode to do so.

Create an Invincible Boxer
To create a boxer impervious to harm, enter your pugilist's name as "INVINCIBLE" in the Career Mode. Clever, huh?

Disable All Codes
If you have been mucking up the works with all kinds of created boxer codes, create yet another pugilist named "RESETPASS" in Career Mode to set things straight.

Do Double Damage
Create a boxer named "DOUBLEDAMAGE" in Career Mode to lay twice the smackdown on unsuspecting foes.

Gerber Ghost Code
When you enter "NALU" as the name of your created boxer in Career Mode, a picture of a baby will appear next to the round indicator in the lower right corner of the screen. Odd, but true.

Sepia Tone Mode
In the Career Mode, enter your character name as "SEPIA." When you begin your career, the fights will be presented in Sepia Tone.

Unlock Ashy Knucks
Type "KNUCKS" in the Career Mode as your character name to unlock a boxer named "Ashy Knucks."

Unlock Black and White Mode
To unlock the black and white mode, simply enter "BAW" as your boxer's name in Career Mode.

Unlock Jason Giambi
Enter "GIAMBI" as your character name in the Career Mode and you'll fight as Jason Giambi, Oakland A and last year's AL MVP.

Unlock Junior Seau
Enter "SEAU" as your character name in the Career Mode, and you'll be boxing as San Diego Chargers' great Junior Seau.

Unlock Schmacko Throb
In the Career Mode, enter "THROB" as your boxer's name and you'll be fighting as "Schmacko Throb."

Super Bombad Racing
Everything you need to know about the Star Wars kart game from the guys who played it way too much.

In Super Bombad Racing, you gain control of one of many super cute versions of popular Star Wars characters. Based on Star Wars: Episode I, the game takes you on a fast ride throughout nine unique tracks and four battle arenas.

This guide will give you details on each of the characters, including their stats, special weapon details, and a little history on each of them. We will also give you walkthroughs of each and every one of the nine different courses in the game, which will detail where all of the hidden shortcuts and secrets are. Finally, you will find details on each of the battle arenas with tips as to where to place the best weapons.

Characters

Super Bombad Racing gives you eight initial characters to choose from, as well as one character than you can unlock (Darth Vader) if you complete the Galaxy Circuit mode with Anakin Skywalker.
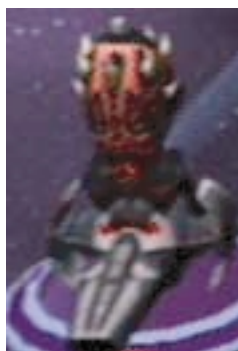
Darth Maul
A Dark Lord of the Sith, Darth Maul is from the alien race known as the Zabrak. Coming from a harsh planet these aliens differentiate themselves via an elaborate series of unique tattoos. Darth Maul was slain by the Padawan Obi-Wan Kenobi in the Power Station of the Theed Palace approximately fifteen years before the start of the Clone Wars.
Mass: High
Top Speed: High
Acceleration: Low
Turning: Low
Special Weapon: Double Bladed Lightsabre. When this is tossed, it causes the opponent's shields to drop.

Jar Jar Binks
A bumbling Gungan from Naboo, Jar Jar Binks unknowingly played a large role in defeating the Trade Federation during their invasion of the planet. Not long after Naboo was freed, Jar Jar went on to become a Senator representing the planet.
Mass: Medium
Top Speed: High
Acceleration: Low
Turning: Low
Special Weapon: Tongue. Can be used to grab an opponent and sling shot Jar Jar away.

Sebulba
The short alien was previously the Pod Racing champion of Tatooine. Not much is known of his fate after Anakin Skywalker won the Boonta Classic.
Mass: Low
Top Speed: Medium
Acceleration: Medium
Turning: High
Special Weapon: Junk Toss. This weapon throws garbage at enemies.

(continued on next page)

Super Bombad Racing (cont'd.)
Everything you need to know about the Star Wars
kart game from the guys who played it way too much.

Boss Nass
The leader of the Gungans, Boss Nass helped play a large role in uniting the
Gungan and Naboo. He continues to be a strong leader of the Gungan race.
Mass: High
Top Speed: High
Acceleration: Low
Turning: Low
Special Weapon: Spit. Boss Nass, well, spits mucus at an opponent.

Obi-Wan Kenobi
Once a Jedi Padawan to Qui Gon Jinn, Obi-Wan Kenobi took over Anakin Skywalker's
training after the liberation of Naboo. He fought in the Clone Wars, going into seclusion
after Anakin Skywalker fell to the Dark Side of the Force and became Darth Vader.
Mass: Medium
Top Speed: Medium
Acceleration: Medium
Turning: Medium
Special Weapon: Levitate. Used to toss an enemy out of the way.
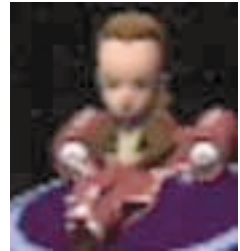
Yoda
A Jedi Master from an ancient race, Yoda once held a seat on the Jedi Council.
After the Jedi Purge he too went into seclusion until Anakin Skywalker's son
came searching for a Jedi Master to train him in the ways of the Force.
Mass: Low
Top Speed: Low
Acceleration: High
Turning: High
Special Weapon: Junk Toss. This weapon throws garbage at enemies.

Anakin Skywalker
Born a slave on Tatooine, Anakin Skywalker won his freedom by beating Sebulba to win
the Boonta Classic Pod Race. He became a Padawan learner to Obi-Wan Kenobi, and
wed Padme Amidala before turning to the Dark Side of the Force and becoming the
dark apprentice of Emperor Palpatine, Darth Vader.
Mass: Low
Top Speed: Low
Acceleration: High
Turning: High
Special Weapon: Energy Coupler. Drains opponent's energy.

Queen Amidala
The young queen of the Naboo, Padme Amidala went on to wed Anakin
Skywalker and is also the mother of Luke and Leia.
Mass: Low
Top Speed: Low
Acceleration: Medium
Turning: Medium
Special Weapon: Reflective Blast. Blinds enemies that are near.

Darth Vader
Vader is the result of Anakin Skywalker falling to the Dark Side of the Force. He goes on
to be eventually redeemed by his son, Luke Skywalker during the Battle of Endor.
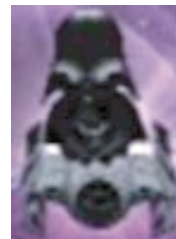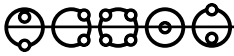**How to Unlock Darth Vader:** Get a gold metal on the with Anakin Skywalker.
Mass: High
Top Speed: High
Acceleration: Low
Turning: Low
Special Weapon: Death Star of death!

PLAYSTATION 2 WALKTHROUGH

Super Bombad Racing (cont'd.)
Everything you need to know about the Star Wars
kart game from the guys who played it way too much.
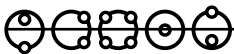
TRACKS:Circuit 1:Naboo Swamp

The first race of the game is a relaxing drive through the peaceful swampland of Naboo. Being the first competition in the game, the track doesn't throw any deadly twists, turns, or pits at you and it basically a rather simply oval style racetrack. Your race begins at two giant stone faces, the remnants of some ancient civilization on Naboo. Once Captain Tarpals gives the signal, the force field will drop and the race begins.

There are a couple secrets in this level, with the first right after the starting line. You can jump up on top of the pyramid to get a Mystery Gadget power up, which will randomly give you a weapon or power up. To get on top of the pyramid, you can use the left or right ledges of the track to get you a little boost up to the top, or you can simply jump up there if you have enough speed

(easiest to do on the 2nd or 3rd lap).

The next thing to watch out for is during the first curve to the left (where you will be speeding across the water). On the outside of the turn, the right part of the track, will be a Fanback creature that will try to munch on you if you get too close. To avoid this guy, hug the inside part of the track when speeding through this turn.

Finally, you can get the last secret in the track when you go through the large tree near the end. If you stay to the right when going through it, you can go up a little ramp and grab a booster power up, which will help you gain a little speed to take the lead at the end of the track.

TRACKS:Circuit 1:Dune Sea

Your first trip to Tatooine in Bombad Racing will take you to the barren Dune Sea where you will encounter Jawas, their Sand Crawler, Moisture Vaporators, and even a Sandstorm. As with the Naboo Swamp, the track is a rather simple, with itbeing nearly a figure-eight form, with only one really big shortcut.

The first thing to look out for will be Jawas on the left and right sides of the first canyon that you go through. They will be on your left first, and they will fire a shrinking beam at you. To avoid being shrunk, hug the left wall and then hug the right wall to avoid getting hit by the next wave of fire.

After that, you will be shortly arriving at the shortcut. You will come to a place in the track where there are tiny ramps on the left and right and a center path that leads over a bridge and through a small cave. If you take either the left or right ramps, and jump at the very end, you can reach the top "roof" of the cave and speed along that. By doing that you are able to find two Special Attack power ups, as well as one Mystery Gadget.

Once you get past that shortcut, you will be in the arid dunes of the Dune Sea. Right before the finish line will be a small sandstorm (complete with a Jawa caught in it) that can slow you down a little bit. If you hug the inside of the track while passing through it, you will avoid the brunt of the force and maintain most of your speed to cross the finish line.
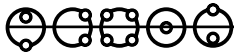
PLAYSTATION 2 WALKTHROUGH

Super Bombad Racing (cont'd.)
Everything you need to know about the Star Wars
kart game from the guys who played it way too much.

TRACKS:Circuit 1:Theed City

The majestic city of Theed is the capital city for the Naboo, and the home of Princess Amidala. When the Trade Federation invades, the city becomes garrisoned and a very dangerous place to be. Race #3 in Super Bombad Racing takes place throughout Theed as the Trade Federation is setting up shop. During the race you will be dodging battle tanks and Battle Droids as well as the occasional Droid Starfighter.

Your first shortcut in the race comes right after the second fountain that you pass (there are four boost power ups lined in front of the fountain). You can boost across to a roof and save a little time to get to the next area, where there is a waterfall leading to the water tunnel.

After that there is a huge drop right before the end of the track. You can boost off of the ledge and land on top of the domed building for a Special Weapon power up. From there, drop down and right after the barriers to the left, you can turn and zoom up the grassy hill and shave off even more seconds right before the finish line.
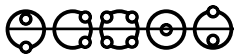
TRACKS:Circuit 2:Pod Race

Anakin Skywalker won the Boonta Classic pod race to win his freedom from Watto in the Phantom Menace, and that is the basis for the first race of the second circuit in Super Bombad Racing.

The first shortcut on this track takes place right after the starting line. You curve to the left past the stands, and then you'll see a wooden barrier to the right. If you hop up and then smash through this barrier, you can cut a few seconds off your time. Next you can hop in between two pillars immediately after the last arrow that is pointing to the right.

Then after the canyon with the large rolling boulders, you will come to a small canal lined with bones. With enough speed you can hop up and speed along the left or right ridges of this canal, which will immediately lead to another shortcut.

As soon as the bone canal ends, you can sharply turn to the left to find two different passages. The one to the left holds two booster power ups and one special attack, and it dumps you out closer to the finish line.

Shortcut 1: The Barrier
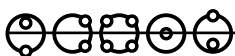
Shortcut 2: The Canyon

Shortcut 3: The Bone Canal

Super Bombad Racing (cont'd.)
Everything you need to know about the Star Wars
kart game from the guys who played it way too much.

TRACKS:Circuit 2:Otoh Gunga

The underwater home of the Gungans is Otoh Gunga. Jar Jar brought Qui Gon and Obi-Wan here in the Phantom Menace to receive the Bongo sub so they could make their way to Theed. This race is one of the more enjoyable ones in the game, as you will be racing underwater for most of the track, which allows you to move up and down, as if you were flying.

Your first shortcut comes in the first open area in the underwater tunnel. There will be a large pillar to your right. As soon as you see it, veer to the right and drive around it. Dodge the giant Opee Sea Killer who will be swimming in the area, and then grab the speed boost on the small pillar and speed through the tunnel ahead.

Then as the tunnel ends, make a sharp turn to the right and speed over the rocks and past the crashed ship to your left. The exit out of the underwater caves will be to your right, and if you took this shortcut you will have probably gained a large lead.

After that, race forward and over the bridge. Once you pass through an archway, you will have the choice to go forward, or follow the spiraling path to the left. The quickest way to the finish line is actually to turn left and speed up the path while gathering the two boosts on the way.

TRACKS:Circuit 2:Mos Espa

Mos Espa was the home of Anakin Skywalker and his mother while they were slaves to Watto on Tatooine. The final race of the second circuit takes you on a fast and speedy trip through the Mos Espa market, through Watto's junkyard, and then finally through the Slave Quarters area that leads to the finish line.

The quickest way through this track is to actually not get caught up in Watto's Junkyard. Right after the finish line, you'll come to his hut that is in the middle of the road. To the right and left of the hut are paths, and each one holds a boost.

To get through the race as quickly as possible, take the left path and continue to hug the left wall throughout the entire track. If you do that, you shouldn't have much trouble coming into the finish line ahead of the pack.
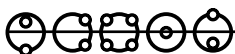
TRACKS:Circuit 3:Coruscant

Coruscant is the center of the Republic (and soon, the Empire). The planet is completely covered by a vast cityscape. Circuit 3's first race takes place throughout the streets of this giant city.

The first place where you can gain some time is shortly after the first big drop after the start of the race. You will be approaching the Senate Building (it looks like a giant mushroom), and you will be able to go to the left or the right. Veer to the left and keep heading in that direction as that is the way the path goes.

Your next opportunity to take the lead happens right before the finish line. The final stretch of the track turns to the left sharply. As you are approaching this turn, you can jump from the straightaway towards the finish line and cut the corner by a large margin.
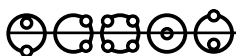
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PLAYSTATION 2 WALKTHROUGH

Super Bombad Racing (cont'd.)
Everything you need to know about the Star Wars kart game from the guys who played it way too much.

TRACKS:Circuit 3:Power Station

The large Power Station inside the Theed Palace was the setting for the Duel of the Fates in the movie as well as the second to last race in the game. Due to the twisting path through the actual generator part of the level, it is actually one of the trickier levels to navigate through, but there is one big shortcut that you can take towards the end.

After the generator area of the level, you will enter the pit area where Darth Maul struck down Qui Gon. After the first turn to the left, you can jump up on to the right ledge that has two boosts. Then boost and immediately jump over to the left ledge to grab two more boosts, and then jump at full speed across to the opening at the top of the left wall.

TRACKS:Circuit 3:Droid Control Ship

Star Wars: Episode I: The Phantom Menace ended with a huge space battle around the massive Droid Control Ship that was in orbit above Naboo. Super Bombad Racing ends with a final race through this giant ship.

There are a couple big shortcuts in this track. The first one takes place where you must choose to go through one of three tunnels. It doesn't matter which one you go through, but at the end you can jump up on the large pipe and then onto the long ledge to the right of the room that is lined with boosters. From there you can leap over to a ledge that is at the top of the room, which leads to a tunnel that deposits you on top of the large round generator.

The next shortcut is found right from that round generator. To the left of the circular tunnel that everyone else is going through is a square vent. If you boost over while pulling back on the analog stick you can reach the vent and break through. The tunnel will then lead you to the halfway point of the large room with all of the crates.

If you decide to skip that shortcut, you can find a different one in the room after the round generator. You can jump up on the pipes overhead, which will allow you to reach the tops of the crates in the next room. This will save you some time on your way to the finish line.
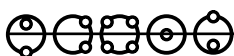
PLAYSTATION 2 WALKTHROUGH

Super Bombad Racing (cont'd.)
Everything you need to know about the Star Wars
kart game from the guys who played it way too much.

ARENAS:Naboo Battlefield

When the Gungans stood their ground against the Trade Federation, the grassy
hills of Naboo became a massive battleground and that is the location of the
first battle arena.

The arena is round with two sides separated by a small river in the middle that
forks at the north side. One side of the arena has a large hill and many
destroyed battle tanks. It also holds one of the few boost power ups in the
level. The other side has roving battle tanks and a special weapon power up.
Each of the two sides also feature catapults that can launch you out of danger.

Weapons that are dropped behind you such as the orbs or green cubes are very
handy (and annoying) in this level due to the hilly environment. Because other players will be dropping them
around, be careful when speeding over the hills, or else you may slam into something that you didn't want to.

ARENAS:Jedi Temple

The Jedi Temple is the home and training grounds for the Jedi Knights on Coruscant, and it is also where the
Jedi Council meets. As opposed to the previous arena, which was circular and rather simple, this one is more
complex with many ramps and tunnels to explore.
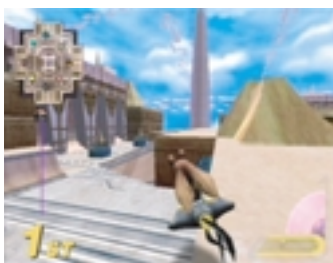
This map features pillared structures at the north, east, south, and west sides
each with a forward weapon and a boost inside. Then the "ring" surrounding the
center area has a tunnel under each ramp with the same two power ups. There is
a hollow area under the center tower that is also filled with power ups.

Since there are a ton of boosts in this level, you can fly around at high speed, and
use any defensive weapon that you want. The only thing that is really dangerous
here is speeding around a corner too fast, as other players will be doing the same
and you may find yourself headed directly toward an opponent who is ready to fry
you with their favorite weapon.
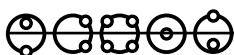
ARENAS:Great Pit of Carkoon

Jabba the Hutt enjoys tossing those he does not like into the Great Pit of Carkoon
for a slow digestion over a thousand years. This digestion is said to be extremely
painful, so that makes this a perfect multiplayer map!

The pit in the center will munch on you if you get too close, and that will tear
down your shields quickly. A problem with this is that most of the items in the
level are scattered around the pit in the center. The way to survive this level is to
quickly zoom in, snatch up the item that you want, and then retreat to safety as
the other players kill each other near the pit o' death.

ARENAS:Hoth Asteroid

Han Solo and pals hid in this asteroid after escaping the Imperial invasion of Hoth. This is
the final arena stage, but it is also one of the most fun.

Scattered throughout the crater are Anti-Grav Boost power ups. When these are used, you
are able to hold down L1 and pull back on the stick to fly around the arena. You need to
use these power ups in order to reach the tops of the pillars where multiple offensive and
special weapon items are located.

Some things to look for in this stage: the Millennium Falcon flying around, and the giant
space slug that calls the asteroid home.